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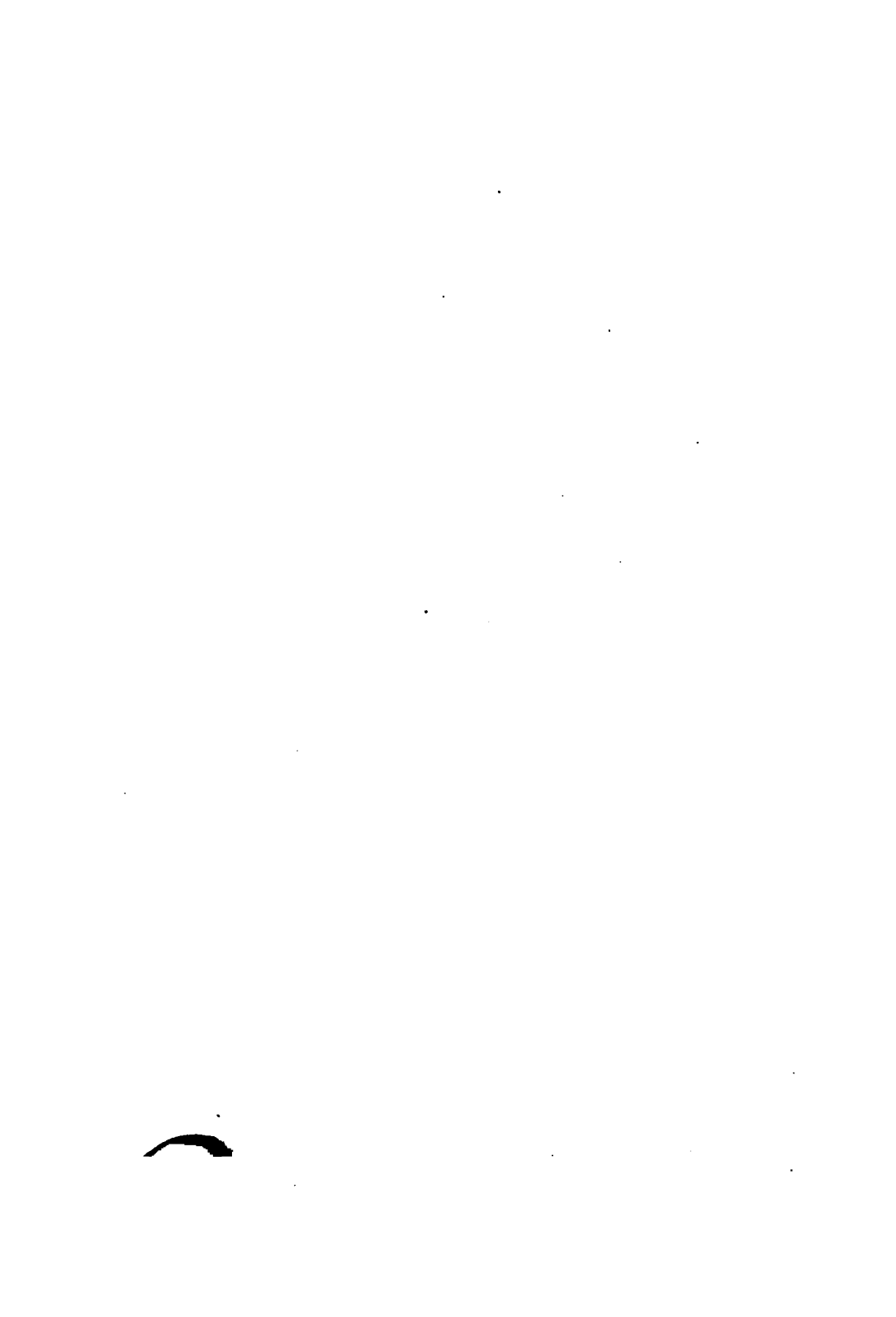


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LES MISÉRABLES.

VOL. II.



LES MISÉRABLES.

BY

VICTOR HUGO.

AUTHORIZED ENGLISH TRANSLATION

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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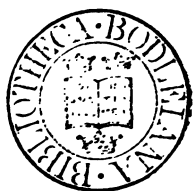
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LES MISÉRABLES.

CHAPTER I.

NO. 62, RUE PICPUS.

HALF a century ago nothing more resembled any ordinary porte cochère than that of No. 62, Petite Rue Picpus. This door, generally half-open in the most inviting manner, allowed you to see two things which are not of a very mournful nature—a court yard with walls covered with vines, and the face of a lounging porter. Above the bottom wall tall trees could be seen, and, when a sunbeam enlivened the yard, and a glass of wine had enlivened the porter, it was difficult to pass before No. 62 and not carry away a laughing idea. And yet, you had had a glimpse of a very gloomy place. The threshold smiled, but the house prayed and wept. If you succeeded, which was not easy, in passing the porter—as was, indeed, impossible for nearly all, for there was an “Open, Sesame,” which it was necessary to know—you entered on the right a small hall from which ran a staircase enclosed between two walls, and so narrow that only one person could go up at a time: if you were not frightened by the canary-coloured plaster and chocolate wainscot of this staircase, and still boldly ascended, you crossed two landings and found yourself in a passage on the first-floor, where the yellow distemper and chocolate skirting board followed you with a quiet pertinacity. The staircase and passage were lighted by two fine windows, but the latter soon made a bend and became dark. When you had doubled this cape, you found yourself before a door, which was the more mysterious because it was not closed. You pushed it open, and found yourself in a small room about six feet square, well scrubbed, clean, and frigid, and hung with a yellow-green

sprigged paper, at fifteen sous the piece. A white pale light came through a large window with small panes, which was on the left, and occupied the whole width of the room; you looked about you but saw nobody; you listened, but heard neither a footstep nor a human sound; the walls were bare, and the room unfurnished—there was not even a chair.

You looked again, and saw in the wall facing the door a square hole, covered with a black knotty substantial cross-barred grating, which formed diamonds—I had almost written meshes—at least an inch and a half across. The little green sprigs on the yellow paper came right up to these bars, calmly and orderly, and the funereal contact did not make them start or wither. Even supposing that any human being had been so wondrously thin as to attempt to go in or out by the square hole, the bars would have prevented him: but, though they did not let the body pass, the eyes, that is to say, the mind, could. It seemed as if this had been thought of, for it had been lined with a tin plate, in which were bored thousands of holes more microscopic than those of a strainer. Beneath this plate was an opening exactly like the mouth of a letter-box, and a bell-wire hung by the side of this hole. If you pulled this wire, a bell tinkled, and you heard a voice close to you which made you start.

“Who is there?” the voice asked.

It was a female voice, a gentle voice, so gentle that it was melancholy. Here, again, there was a magic word which it was necessary to know; if you did not know it, the voice ceased, and the wall became silent again, as if the terrifying darkness of the tomb were on the other side. If you knew the word, the voice continued,—“Turn to the right.” You then noticed, facing the window, a door, the upper part of which was of gray painted glass. You raised the latch, walked in, and experienced precisely the same expression as when you enter a box at the theatre, before the gilt grating has been lowered and the chandelier lighted. You were in fact in a species of box, scarce lighted by the faint light that came through the glass door, narrow, furnished with two old chairs and a ragged sofa—a real box with a black entablature to represent the front. This box had a grating, but it was not made of gilt wood as at the opera, but was a monstrous trellis-work of frightfully interlaced iron bars, fastened to the wall by enormous clamps that resembled clenched fists. When the first few moments were past, and your eye began to grow accustomed to this cellar-like gloom, you tried to look through the grating, but could not see more than six inches beyond it; there it met a barrier of

black shutters, connected and strengthened by cross-beams, and painted of a gingerbread yellow. These shutters were jointed, divided into long thin planks, and covered the whole width of the grating; they were always closed. At the expiration of a few minutes, you heard a voice calling to you from behind the shutters, and saying to you,

“I am here, what do you want with me?”

It was a loved voice, sometimes an adored voice, but you saw nobody, and could scarce hear the sound of breathing. It seemed as it were an evocation addressing you through the wall of a tomb. If you fulfilled certain required and very rare conditions, the narrow plank of one of the shutters opened opposite to you, and the evocation became an apparition. Behind the grating, behind the shutter, you perceived, as far as the grating would allow, a head, of which you only saw the mouth and chin, for the rest was covered by a black veil. You caught a glimpse of a black wimple and of a scarce distinct form, covered by a black pall. This head spoke to you, but did not look at you, and never smiled. The light that came from behind you was so arranged that you saw her in brightness and she saw you in darkness; this light was a symbol. Still your eyes plunged eagerly through the opening into this place, closed against all looks,—a profound vacuum surrounded this form clothed in mourning. Your eyes investigated this vacuum and tried to distinguish what there was around the apparition, but in a very little time you perceived that you could see nothing. What you saw was night, emptiness, gloom, a winter fog mingled with the vapour from a tomb; a sort of terrifying peace; a silence in which nothing could be heard, not even sighs; a shadow in which nothing could be distinguished, not even phantoms. What you saw was the interior of a nunnery, the interior of that gloomy and stern house, which was called the convent of the Perpetual Adoration. The box in which you found yourself was the parlour, and the first voice that addressed you was that of a lay sister, who always sat, silent and motionless, on the other side of the wall, near the square opening which was defended by the iron grating and the tin plate with the thousand holes like a double visor.

The obscurity in which the grated box was plunged, resulted from the fact that the parlour, which had a window on the side of the world, had none on the side of the convent; profane eyes must not see any portion of this sacred spot. Still there was something beyond the shadow; there was a light and life amid this death. Although this convent was the most strictly immured of all, we will try to enter it and take

the reader in with us, and describe, with due regard to decorum, things which novelists have never seen, and consequently never recorded.

CHAPTER II.

THE OBEDIENCE OF MARTIN VERGA.

THIS convent, which had existed for many years prior to 1824 in the Rue Picpus, was a community of Bernardines belonging to the obedience of Martin Verga. These Bernardines, consequently, were not attached to Clairvaux, like the Bernardine brothers, but to Citeaux, like the Benedictines. In other words, they were subjects, not of St Bernard, but of St Benedict. Any one who has at all turned over folios knows that Martin Verga founded, in 1425, a congregation of Bernardo-Benedictines, whose head-quarters were Salamanca, and which had Alcala as an off-shoot. Such a grafting of one order upon another is not at all unusual in the Latin Church. If we confine our attention merely to the Order of St Benedict we find four congregations attached to it, beside the obedience of Martin Verga; in Italy two, Monte Cassino and Saint Justina of Padua; two in France, Cluny and St Marco, and nine orders, —Valombrosa, Grammont, the Celestins, the Calmalduli, the Chartreux, the Humiliated, the Olivateurs, and the Silvestrines, and, lastly, Citeaux; for Citeaux itself, while trunk for other orders, is only a branch with Saint Benedict. Citeaux dates from St Robert, Abbot of Molesmes, in the diocese of Langres, in 1098. Now it was in 529 that Sathanas, who had retired to the desert of Subiaco (he was old, did he turn hermit?), was expelled from the temple of Apollo in which he resided, by St Benedict, a youth of seventeen years of age.

Next to the rule of the Carmelites, who walk barefoot, wear a piece of wicker-work on their throat, and never sit down, the hardest rule is that of the Bernardo-Benedictines of Martin Verga. They are dressed in black with a wimple, which, by the express order of St Benedict, comes up to the chin; a serge gown with wide sleeves, a large woollen veil, the wimple cut square on the chest, and the coif, which comes down to their eyes,—such is their dress. All is black, excepting the coif, which

is white. Novices wear the same garb, but all white, while the professed nuns also wear a rosary by their side. The Bernardo-Benedictines of Martin Verga practise the Perpetual Adoration, in the same way as those Benedictines called the ladies of the Holy Sacrament, who, at the beginning of this century, had two houses in Paris, one in the Temple, the other in the Rue Neuve Ste Geneviève. In other respects, the nuns of the Little Picpus to whom we are referring entirely differed from the ladies of the Holy Sacrament; there were several distinctions in the rule as well as in the dress. The nuns of Little Picpus wore a black wimple, the former a white one, and had also on their chest a Holy Sacrament, about three inches in length, of plate or gilt brass. The nuns of the Little Picpus did not wear this decoration. The Perpetual Adoration, while common in Little Picpus and the Temple house, leaves the two orders perfectly distinct. This practice is the only resemblance between the ladies of the Holy Sacrament and the Bernardines of Martin Verga, in the same way as there was a similitude, for the study and glorification of all the mysteries attaching to the infancy, life, and death of the Saviour, between two orders which were greatly separated and at times hostile,—the oratory of Italy, established at Florence by Philippe de Neri, and the oratory of France, established in Paris by Pierre de Bérulle. The Paris oratory claimed precedence because Philippe de Neri was only a saint, while Bérulle was a cardinal. But to return to the harsh Spanish rule of Martin Verga.

The Bernardo-Benedictines of this obedience abstain from meat the whole year; fast all Lent, and on many other days, special to themselves; get up in their first sleep, from one to three A. M., in order to read their breviary and chant matins; sleep in serge sheets at all seasons, and on straw; never bathe or light fires; chastise themselves every Friday; observe the rule of silence; only speak during recreation, which is very short, and wear coarse flannel chemises for six months, from Sept. 14, which is the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, up to Easter. These six months are a moderation,—the rule says all the year, but the flannel chemise, insupportable in the heat of summer, produced fevers and nervous spasms. Even with this relief, when the nuns put on the flannel chemise on Sept. 14, they suffer from fever for three or four days. Obedience, poverty, chastity, perseverance—such are their vows, which are greatly aggravated by the rule. The prioress is elected for three years by mothers, called "*Mères Vocales*," because they have a voice in the Chapter. She can be only re-elected twice, which fixes the longest possible reign of a prioress at nine years. They never

see the officiating priest, who is hidden from them by a green-baize curtain nine feet high. At the sermon, when the preacher is in the chapel, they draw their veil over their face; they must always speak low, and walk with their eyes fixed on the ground. Only one man is allowed to enter the convent, and he is the Diocesan Archbishop. There is certainly another, who is the gardener; but he is always an aged man, and in order that he may be constantly alone in the garden, and that the nuns may avoid him, a bell is fastened to his knee. The nuns must display absolute and passive submission to the prioress, and it is canonical subjection in all its self-denial. They must obey as if it were the voice of Christ, *ut voci Christi*, at a nod, at the first signal, *ad nutum, ad primum signum*; at once, cheerfully, perseveringly, and with a certain bland obedience, *prompté, hilariter, perseveranter, et cæcâ quâdam obedientiâ*; like the file in the workman's hand, *quasi limam in manibus fabri*, and are not allowed to read or write anything without express permission, *legere vel scribere non ediscerit sine expressâ superioris licentiâ*. Each of them performs in turn what they call the "reparation." This reparation is a prayer for all the sins, faults, irregularities, violations, iniquities, and crimes performed upon earth. For twelve consecutive hours, from four in the evening till four the next morning, the sister who performs the reparation remains on her knees, on the stone before the Holy Sacrament, with her hands clasped, and a rope round her neck. When the fatigue becomes insupportable she prostrates herself with her face on the ground, and her arms forming a cross,—that is her sole relief. In this attitude she prays for all the guilty in the world; it is a grand, almost a sublime idea. As this act is accomplished in front of a stake on the top of which a wax candle is burning, it is called either "making reparation," or "being at the stake." The nuns through humility, indeed, prefer the latter expression, which contains an idea of punishment and abasement. Making reparation is a function in which the whole soul is absorbed; the sister at the stake would not turn round were a thunder-bolt to fall behind her. Moreover, there is always a nun on her knees before the Holy Sacrament; this station lasts an hour, and they relieve each other like sentries. That is the Perpetual Adoration.

The prioress and mothers nearly all have names imprinted with peculiar gravity, recalling, not saints and martyrs, but the incidents in the life of the Saviour,—such as Mother Nativity, Mother Conception, Mother Presentation, and Mother Passion; still the names of saints are not interdicted. When you see them, you never see more of them than their mouth; and they all

have yellow teeth, for a tooth-brush never entered the convent. Cleaning the teeth is the first rung of the ladder, at the foot of which is "losing the soul." They do not call anything "mine;" they have nothing of their own, and must not be attached to anything. They say of everything "ours,"—thus, our veil, our beads; if they were to allude to their chemise they would say "our chemise." Sometimes they grow attached to some trifling object, a book of hours, a relic, or consecrated medal, but so soon as they perceive that they are beginning to grow fond of it, they are obliged to give it away. They remember the remark of Saint Theresa, to whom a great lady said, at the moment of entering her order—"Allow me, Holy Mother, to send for a Bible to which I am greatly attached." "Ah, you are still attached to something! in that case do not come among us." No one must lock herself in under any pretence, or have a room of her own, and they live with open doors. When they pass each other, one says, "The most Holy Sacrament of the Altar be blessed and adored," and the other answers, "For ever." There is the same ceremony when one sister raps at another sister's door; the door has scarce been touched, ere a gentle voice is heard saying hurriedly from within, "For ever." Like all practices, this one becomes mechanical through habit; and a sister will sometimes say "For ever," before the other has had time to utter the long sentence, "The most Holy Sacrament of the Altar be blessed and adored!" Among the Visitandines, the one who enters says "Ave Maria," to which the other replies, "Gratiâ plena;" this is their greeting, which is truly full of grace. At each hour of the day, three supplementary strokes are struck on the chapel bell, and at this signal, prioress, vocal mothers, professed nuns, lay sisters, novices, and postulants, break off what they are saying, doing, or thinking, and all repeat together—if it be five o'clock, for instance,—“At five o'clock, and at every hour, may the most Holy Sacrament of the Altar be blessed and adored,” and so on, according to the hour. This custom, which is intended to break off thoughts and ever lead them back to God, exists in many communities, the form alone varying. Thus, at the Infant Jesus, they say, "At the present hour, and at every hour, may the love of Jesus inflame my heart!"

The Bernardo-Benedictines of Martin Verga sing the offices to a grave, full chant, and always in a loud voice, during the whole of the service. Whenever there is an asterisk in the missal, they pause, and say in a low voice, "Jesus, Marie, Joseph." In the service for the dead they employ such a deep note, that female voices can scarce descend to it, and there

results from it a striking and tragical effect. The sisters of Little Picpus had a vault under their high altar for the burial of their community, but the Government, as they call it, would not allow coffins to be placed in this vault, and they therefore left the convent when they were dead; this afflicted and consternated them like an infraction. They had obtained the slight consolation of being buried at a special hour and in a special corner of the old Vaugirard cemetery, which was established in a field that had once belonged to the community. On Thursday these nuns attend high mass, vespers, and all the services as on Sunday; and they also scrupulously observe all the little festivals unknown to people of the world, of which the Church was formerly so prodigal in France, and still remains so in Spain and Italy. Their stations in the chapels are innumerable, and as for the number and length of their prayers, we cannot give a better idea than by quoting the simple remark of one of them,—“The prayers of the Postulants are frightful, those of the novices worse, and those of the professed nuns worse still.” Once a week the Chapter meets, the prioress presiding and the vocal mothers assisting. Each sister comes in her turn to kneel on the stone, and confesses aloud, in the presence of all, the faults and sins which she has committed during the week. The vocal mothers consult after each confession and inflict the penances aloud. In addition to the loud confession, for which all faults at all serious are reserved, they have for venial faults what they call “la coulpe.” The penitent prostrates herself on her face during service in front of the prioress, who is never addressed otherwise than “our mother;” until the latter warns the sufferer, by a slight tap on the arm of her stall, that she can get up. The nuns perform this penance for very trivial things; breaking a glass, tearing a veil, an involuntary delay of a few seconds in attending service, a false note in chapel, that is enough. This penance is quite voluntary, and the culprit (this word is etymologically in its place here) tries and punishes herself. On festivals and Sundays there are four singing mothers, who chant at a large lectern with four desks. One day a singing mother was striking up a psalm, which began with the word *Ecce*, and said instead, quite loud, *ut, si, sol*; and for this absence of mind she underwent a penance that lasted the whole service. What rendered the fault enormous was that the congregation laughed.

When a nun is summoned to the parlour, even if she be the prioress, she pulls down her veil in such a way as only to show her mouth. The prioress alone can communicate with

strangers: the others can only see their nearest relations, and that very rarely. If by chance a person from the outer world requests to see a nun whom she had formerly known or loved, a lengthened negotiation is required. If it be a woman, the permission may possibly be granted. The nun comes and is spoken to through the shutters, which are only opened for a mother or a sister. We need hardly say that permission is never granted to men.

Such is the rule of St Benedict, aggravated by Martin Verga. These nuns are not gay, rosy, and fresh, as we find sometimes in other orders,—they are pale and serious, and between 1825 and 1830 three of them went mad.

CHAPTER III.

THE BOARDING SCHOOL.

ANY one desirous of joining the community of Martin Verga must be at least two years a postulant, sometimes four, and four years a novice. It is rare for the final vows to be taken before the age of twenty-three or twenty-four years. The Bernardo-Benedictines of Martin Verga admit no widows into their order. In their cells they undergo many strange macerations, of which they are not allowed to speak. On the day when a novice professes, she is dressed in her best clothes, wears a wreath of white roses, has her hair curled, and then prostrates herself; a large black veil is spread over her, and the service for the dead is performed. Then the nuns divide into two files, one of which passes her, saying in a plaintive voice, "Our sister is dead," and the other answers triumphantly, "Living in Jesus Christ."

At the period when this story is laid, there was a boarding school attached to the convent, the pupils being young ladies of noble birth, and generally rich. Among them could be noticed Milles de Ste Aulaire and de Bélisseu, and an English girl, bearing the illustrious Catholic name of Talbot. These young ladies, educated by the nuns between four walls, grew up with a horror of the world and of the century; one of them said to us one day, "Seeing the street pavement made me shudder from head to foot." They were dressed in blue with a white cap and a plated or gilt Holy Ghost on the chest. On

certain high festivals, especially Saint Martha, they were allowed, as a high favour and supreme happiness, to dress themselves like nuns, and perform the offices and practices of St Benedict for the whole day. At first the nuns lent them their black robes, but this was deemed a profanity, and the prioress forbade it, so the novices alone were permitted to make such loans. It is remarkable that these representations, doubtless tolerated in the convent through a secret spirit of proselytism, and in order to give their children some foretaste of the sacred dress, were a real happiness and true recreation for the boarders; they were amused by them, for "it was a novelty and changed them,"—candid reasons of children, which do not succeed, however, in making us worldly-minded people understand the felicity of holding a holy-water brush in one's hand, and standing for hours before a lectern and singing quartettes. The pupils conformed to all the practices of the convent, though not to all the austerities. We know a young lady who, after returning to the world and being married for some years, could not break herself of hastily saying, each time that there was a rap at the door, "For ever!" like the nuns. The boarders only saw their parents in the parlour,—their mothers themselves were not even allowed to kiss them. To show how far this severity was carried a young lady was visited one day by her mother, accompanied by a little sister three years of age. The young lady cried, because she would have liked to kiss her sister, but it was impossible. She implored at least permission for the child to pass her hand through the bars, so that she might kiss it, but it was refused almost as a scandal.

For all this, though, the young ladies filled this grave house with delightful reminiscences. At certain hours childhood sparkled in this cloister. The bell for recreation was rung, the gate creaked on its hinges, and the birds whispered to each other, "Here are the children." An irruption of youth inundated this garden, which with its cross walks resembled a pall. Radiant faces, white foreheads, ingenuous eyes, full of gay light—all sorts of dawn—spread through the gloom. After the psalm-singing, the bell-ringing, and the services, the noise of girls, softer than the buzzing of bees, suddenly burst out. The hive of joy opened, and each brought her honey; they played, they called each other, they formed groups, and ran about; pretty little white teeth chattered at corners; in the distance veils watched the laughter, shadows guarded the beams,—but what matter! they were radiant, and laughed. These four mournful walls had their moment of bedazzlement; vaguely whitened by the reflection of so much joy, they watched this gentle buzzing

of the swarm. It was like a shower of roses falling on this mourning. The girls sported beneath the eye of the nuns, for the glance of impeccability does not disturb innocence; and, thanks to these children, there was a simple hour among so many austere hours. The little girls jumped about and the elder danced, and nothing could be so ravishing and august as all the fresh, innocent expansion of these childish souls. Homer would have come here to dance with Perrault, and there were in this black garden, youth, health, noise, cries, pleasure, and happiness enough to unwrinkle the brows of all the ancestry, both of the epic poem and the fairy tale, of the throne and the cottage, from Hecuba down to la Merè Grand. In this house, more perhaps than elsewhere, those childish remarks were made which possess so much grace, and which make the hearer laugh thoughtfully. It was within these four gloomy walls that a child of four years of age one day exclaimed,—“Mother, a grown-up girl has just told me that I have only nine years and ten months longer to remain here. What happiness!” Here too it was that the memorable dialogue took place.

A VOCAL MOTHER.—“Why are you crying, my child?”

THE CHILD (six years old), sobbing.—“I said to Alix that I knew my French history. She says that I don’t know it, but I do know it.”

ALIX, the grown-up girl (just nine).—“No. She does not know it.”

THE MOTHER.—“How so, my child?”

ALIX.—“She told me to open the book hap-hazard, and ask her a question out of the book, which she would answer.”

“Well?”

“She did not answer it.”

“What was it you asked her?”

“I opened the book as she said, and I asked her the first question that I came across.”

“And pray what was the question?”

“It was ‘*And what happened next?*’”

It was here that the profound observation was made about a rather dainty parrot, which belonged to a lady boarder. “How well bred it is! it eats the top of the slice of bread and butter, just like a lady.” In one of these cloisters was also picked up the following confession, written beforehand, so as not to forget it, by a little sinner of seven years of age.

“My father, I accuse myself of having been avaricious.

"My father, I accuse myself of having committed adultery.

"My father, I accuse myself of having raised my eyes to gentlemen."

It was on one of the benches in the garden that the following fable was improvised by rosy lips six years of age, and listened to by blue eyes of four and five years.

"There were three little cocks, which lived in a place where there were many flowers. They picked the flowers and put them in their pockets; after that they plucked the leaves and put them in their playthings. There was a wolf in those parts, and there was a great deal of wood; and the wolf was in the wood, and all the three cocks."

It was here too that the following sweet and affecting remark was made by a foundling child, whom the convent brought up through charity. She heard the others speaking of their mothers, and she murmured in her corner,—“My mother was not there when I was born.” There was a fat portress who could continually be seen hurrying along the passage, with her bunch of keys, and whose name was Sister Agatha. The grown-up girls—those above ten years of age—called her Agathoclès (*Agathe aux clefs*). The refectory, a large, rectangular room, which only received light through an arched window, looking on the garden, was gloomy and damp, and, as children say, full of animals. All the surrounding places furnished their contingent of insects; and each of the four corners had received a private and expressive name, in the language of the boarders. There were Spider corner, Caterpillar corner, Woodlouse corner, and Cricket corner; the latter was near the kitchen, and highly esteemed, for it was warmer there. The names had passed from the refectory to the school-room, and served to distinguish four nations, as in the old Mazarin College. Every boarder belonged to one or other of these nations, according to the corner of the refectory in which they sat at meals. One day the Archbishop, while paying a pastoral visit, noticed a charming little rosy-faced girl, with glorious light hair, pass, and he asked another boarder, a pretty brunette with pink cheeks, who was near him,—

“Who is that?”

“She is a spider, sir.”

“Nonsense; and this other?”

“Is a cricket.”

“And this one?”

“A caterpillar.”

"Indeed! and what may you be?"

"I am a woodlouse, Monseigneur."

Each house of this nature has its peculiarities: at the beginning of this century, Ecouen was one of those places in which the childhood of children is passed in an almost august gloom. At Ecouen a distinction was made between the virgins and flower-girls, in taking rank in the procession of the Holy Sacrament. There were also the "canopies," and the "censers," the former holding the cords of the canopy, the latter swinging the censers in front of the Holy Sacrament, while four virgins walked in front. On the morning of the great day, it was not rare to have people say in the dormitory,— "Who is a virgin?" Madame Campan mentions a remark made by a little girl of seven to a grown-up girl of sixteen, who walked at the head of the procession, while she, the little one, remained behind; "You are a virgin, you, but I am not one."

CHAPTER IV.

AMUSEMENTS.

ABOVE the refectory door was painted in large black letters the following prayer, which was called the "White Paternoster," and which had the virtue of leading persons straight to Paradise.

"Little white Paternoster, which God made, which God said, which God placed in Paradise. At night, when I went to bed, I found three angels at my bed,—one at the foot, two at the head, and the good Virgin Mary in the middle,—who told me to go to bed and fear nothing. The Lord God is my father, the good Virgin is my mother, the three apostles are my brothers, the three virgins are my sisters. My body is wrapped up in the shirt in which God was born: the cross of St Marguerite is written on my chest. Madame the Virgin weeping for the Lord went into the fields and met there M. St John. 'Monsieur St John, where do you come from?' 'I have come from the *Ave Salus*.' 'You have not seen the Lord, have you?' 'He is on the tree of the cross with hanging feet, nailed-up hands, and a little hat of white-thorn on his head.' Whosoever repeats

this, thrice at night and thrice in the morning, will gain Paradise in the end." *

In 1827, this characteristic orison had disappeared beneath a triple coat of whitewash, and at the present day it is almost effaced from the memory of those who were young girls then, and old women now.

A large crucifix fastened to the wall completed the decoration of this refectory ; whose only door opened on the garden. Two narrow tables, with wooden benches on each side, formed two long parallel lines from one end to the other of the refectory. The walls were white, the tables black ; for these two mourning colours are the sole variations in convents. The meals were poor, and the food of even the children scanty ; a single plate of meat and vegetables or salt-fish was the height of luxury. This ordinary, reserved for the boarders alone, was, however, an exception. The children ate and held their tongues under the guardianship of the mother of the week, who, from time to time, if a fly dared to move or buzz contrary to regulation, noisily opened and closed a wooden book. This silence was seasoned with the Lives of the Saints, read aloud from a little desk standing at the foot of the crucifix, the reader being a grown-up pupil, appointed for the week. At regular distances on the bare table there were earthenware bowls, in which the pupils themselves washed their cups and forks and spoons, and sometimes threw in a piece of hard meat or spoiled fish, but this was severely punished. Any child who broke the silence made a cross with her tongue. Where ? On the ground : she licked the stones. Dust, that finale of all joys, was ordered to chastise these poor little roseleaves that were guilty of prattling. There was in the convent a book of which only one copy was printed, and which no one was allowed to read. It is the Rule of St Benedict, a mystery which no profane eye must penetrate. *Nemo regulas seu constitutiones nostras externis communicabil.* The boarders succeeded

* This Paternoster is so curious that I have thought it better to quote the original.—L. W.

"Petite Paternotre blanche, que Dieu dit, que Dieu fit, que Dieu mit en Paradis. Au soir, m'allant coucher, je trouvis (*sic*) trois anges à mon lit coucher, un aux pieds, deux au chevet, la bonne Vierge Marie au milieu qui me dit que je m'y couchis, qui rien ne doutis. Le bon Dieu est mon père, la bonne Vierge est ma mère, les trois apôtres sont mes frères, les trois vierges sont mes sœurs. La chemise où Dieu fut né, mon corps en est enveloppé ; la Croix Sainte Marguerite à ma poitrine est écrite. Madame la Vierge s'en va sur les champs. Dieu pleurant, recontrit M. St Jean. Monsieur St Jean, d'où venez-vous ? Je viens d'*Ave Salus*. Vous n'avez vu le bon Dieu, si est ? Il est dans l'arbre de la Croix, les pieds pendans, les mains clouans, un petit chapeau d'épine blanche sur la tête. Qui la dira trois fois au soir, trois fois au matin, gagnera le Paradis à la fin."

one day in getting hold of this book and began perusing it eagerly, though frequently interrupted by a fear of being surprised, which made them close the book hurriedly. They only derived a slight pleasure from the danger they incurred; for the most interesting portion was a few unintelligible pages about the sins of lads.

They played in a garden walk, bordered by a few stunted fruit trees. In spite of the extreme watch and the severity of the punishment, when the wind shook the trees they at times succeeded in picking up furtively a green apple, or a spoiled apricot, or a wasp-inhabited pear. I will here let a letter speak which I have before me, a letter written by an ex-boarder five-and-twenty years ago, who is now the Duchesse de —, and one of the most elegant women in Paris. I quote exactly. "We hide our pear or our apple, as we can. When we go up to lay our veil on the bed before supper we thrust it under a pillow, and eat it at night in bed, and when that is not possible we eat it in the —." This was one of their liveliest pleasures. On one occasion, at a period when the archbishop was paying a visit at the convent, one of the young ladies, Mademoiselle Bouchard, who was related to the Montmorencys, laid a wager that she would ask him for a holiday, an enormity in such an austere community. The wager was taken, but not one of those who took it believed in it. When the moment arrived for the archbishop to pass before the boarders, Mlle Bouchard, to the indescribable horror of her companions, stepped out of the ranks and said, "Monseigneur, a holiday." Mademoiselle Bouchard was fresh and tall, and had the prettiest pink-and-white face in the world. M. de Quélen smiled, and said,—"What, my dear child, a day's holiday! three, if you like, I grant three days." The prioress could do nothing, as the archbishop had said it. It was a scandal for the convent, but a joy for the boarding school. Just imagine the effect.

This harsh convent, however, was not so well walled in, but that the passions of the outer world, the dramas, and even the romance of life, entered it. To prove this, we will briefly describe a real and incontestable fact, though it is in no way connected with the story which we are narrating. We mention the fact in order to complete the physiognomy of the convent in the reader's mind. About this period, then, there was in the convent a mysterious personage, who was not a nun, but was treated with great respect, and called Madame Albertine. Nothing was known about her except that she was dead, and that in the world she was supposed to be dead. It was said that behind the story were certain monetary arrangements, necessary for a

grand marriage. This woman, who was scarce thirty years of age and a rather pretty brunette, looked vacantly around with her large black eyes. Did she see? it was doubted. She glided along rather than walked; she never spoke, and people were not quite sure whether she breathed. Her nostrils were pinched up and livid, as if she had drawn her last sigh: touching her hand was like touching snow, and she had a strange spectral pace. Wherever she entered she produced a chill; and one day a sister seeing her pass, said to another, "She is supposed to be dead." "Perhaps she is so," the other replied. A hundred stories were current about Madame Albertine, and she was the eternal object of curiosity with the boarders. There was in this chapel a gallery called "L'œil de Bœuf," and it was in this place that Madame Albertine attended service. She was usually alone there, because, as the gallery was high, the preacher could be seen from it, which was prohibited to the nuns. One day the pulpit was occupied by a young priest of high rank, le Duc de Rohan, Peer of France, officer in the Red Musqueteers, in 1815, when he was Prince de Leon, and who died after 1830, a cardinal, and Archbishop of Besançon. It was the first time that this M. de Rohan preached at the Little Picpus. Madame Albertine usually sat in perfect calmness through the service, but on this day, so soon as she perceived M. de Rohan, she half rose, and cried aloud, "Why, it is Auguste!" The whole community looked round in stupefaction, the preacher raised his eyes, but Madame Albertine had fallen back into her apathy; a breath from the outer world, a flash of light, had momentarily passed over this set face, then faded away, and the maniac became once again a corpse. This remark, however, made everybody in the convent who could speak, talk incessantly. What revelations were contained in this "Why, it is Auguste." It was evident that Madame Albertine had moved in the highest society, since she knew M. de Rohan, spoke about so great a nobleman in such a familiar way, and was at least a near relation of his, since she knew his Christian name.

Two very strict Duchesses, Mesdames de Choiseul and de Serent, frequently visited the community, doubtless by virtue of their privilege as *Magnates Mulieres*, and terribly frightened the boarders. When the two old ladies passed, all the poor girls trembled and let their eyes fall. M. de Rohan was, besides, unwittingly the object of attention among the boarders. He had just been appointed, while waiting for a bishopric, Grand Vicar of the Archbishop of Paris, and it was one of his habits to serve mass in the chapel of the Little Picpus convent. Not one of the young recluses could see him, on account of the

baize curtain, but he had a soft and rather shrill voice, which they had managed to recognize and distinguish. He had been a Mousquetaire, and, besides, he was said to be somewhat of a dandy with fine chestnut hair curled round his head, and that he wore a wide scarf of magnificent moire, and his black cassock was cut in the most elegant style. He greatly occupied all their youthful imaginations. No external sound penetrated the convent, and yet one year the sound of a flute reached it. It was an event, and the boarders of that day still remember it. It was a flute which some one was playing in the neighbourhood: it was the same tune, one now very aged, "*Ma Zétulbé, viens regner sur mon âme,*" and it was heard two or three times a day. The girls spent hours in listening, the vocal mothers were upset, brains were at work, and punishments were constant. This lasted several months; the boarders were more or less enamoured of the unknown musician, and each fancied herself Zétulbé. The sound of the flute came from the direction of the Rue Droit-mur. They would have given anything, compromised anything, attempted anything, in order to see, if only for a moment, the young man who played the flute so exquisitely, and at the same time played on all their minds. Some of them slipped out through a back door, and ascended to the third storey looking out of the street, in order to try and see him through the grating, but it was impossible; one went so far as to pass her arm between the bars and wave her white handkerchief. Two others were even bolder; they managed to climb on to the roof, and at length succeeded in seeing the "young man." It was an old emigré gentleman, blind and ruined, who played the flute in his garret in order to kill time.

CHAPTER V.

THE LITTLE CONVENT.

THERE were within the walls of Little Picpus three perfectly distinct buildings,—the great convent inhabited by the nuns, the school-house in which the boarders were lodged, and, lastly, what was called the little convent. The latter was a house with a garden, in which all sorts of old nuns of various orders, the remains of convents broken up in the Revolution, dwelt in common; a reunion of all the black, white, and grey

gowns of all the communities, and all the varieties possible; what might be called, were such a conjunction of words permissible, a conventual *pot-pourri*. Under the Empire all these dispersed and homeless women were allowed to shelter themselves under the wings of the Bernardo-Benedictines; the government paid them a small pension, and the ladies of little Picpus eagerly received them. It was a strange pell-mell, in which each followed her rule. At times the boarders were allowed, as a great recreation, to pay them a visit, and it is from this that these young minds have retained a recollection of Holy Mother Bazile, Holy Mother Scholastica, and Mother Jacob.

One of these refugees was almost at home here; she was a nun of Sainte Aure, the only one of her order who survived. The old convent of the ladies of Sainte Aure occupied at the beginning of the 18th century the same house which at a later date belonged to the Benedictines of Martin Verga. This holy woman, who was too poor to wear the magnificent dress of her order, which was a white robe with a scarlet scapulary, had piously dressed up in it a small doll, which she was fond of showing, and left at her death to the house. In 1820 only one nun of this order remained; at the present day only a doll is left. In addition to these worthy mothers, a few old ladies of the world, like Madame Albertine, had gained permission from the prioress to retire into the little convent. Among them were Madame de Beaufort d'Hautpoul and the Marquise Dufresne; another was only known in the convent by the formidable noise she made in using her handkerchief, and hence the boarders called her Madame Vacarmini. About the year 1820 Madame de Genlis, who edited at that period a small periodical called *L'Intrepide*, asked leave to board at the Little Picpus, and the Duc d'Orleans recommended her. There was a commotion in the hive, and the vocal mothers were all of a tremor, for Madame de Genlis had written romances; but she declared that she was the first to detest them, and moreover she had reached her phase of savage devotion. By the help of Heaven and of the prince she entered, and went away again at the end of six or eight months, alleging as a reason that the garden had no shade. The nuns were delighted at it. Although very old, she still played the harp, and remarkably well too. When she went away she left her mark on her cell. Madame de Genlis was superstitious and a Latin scholar, and these two terms give a very fair idea of her. A few years ago there might still be seen, fixed in the inside of a small cupboard of her cell, in which she kept her money and jewelry, the following five Latin verses, written in her own hand with red ink on yellow

paper, and which, in her opinion, had the virtue of frightening away robbers :

"Imparibus meritis pendent tria corpora ramis :
 Dismas et Gesmas, media est divina potestas :
 Alta petit Dismas, infelix, infima, Gesmas :
 Nos et res nostras conservet summa potestas.
 Hos versus dicas, ne tu furto tua perdas."

These verses, in sixteenth-century Latin, raise the question whether the two thieves of Calvary were called, as is commonly believed, Demas and Gestas, or Dismas and Gesmas. The latter orthography would thwart the claims made in the last century by the Visconte de Gestas, to be descended from the wicked thief. However, the useful virtue attached to these verses is an article of faith in the order of the Hospitaler nuns. The church, so built as to separate the great convent from the boarding school, was common to the school, and the great and little convents. The public were even admitted by a sort of quarantine entrance from the street : but everything was so arranged that not one of the inhabitants of the convent could see a single face from the outer world. Imagine a church whose choir was seized by a gigantic hand, and crushed so as no longer to form, as in ordinary chapels, a prolongation behind the altar, but a sort of obscure cavern on the side of the officiating priest ; imagine this hall closed by the green-baize curtain to which we have referred ; pile up in the shadow of this curtain upon wooden seats the nuns on the left, the boarders on the right, and the lay sisters and novices at the end,—and you will have some idea of the Little Picpus nuns attending divine service. This cavern, which was called the choir, communicated with the convent by a covered way, and the church obtained its light from the garden. When the nuns were present at those services at which their rule commanded silence, the public were only warned of their presence by the sound of the seats being noisily raised and dropped.


CHAPTER VI.

A FEW PROFILES FROM THE SHADOW.

DURING the six years between 1819 and 1825 the prioress of Little Picpus was Mademoiselle de Blêmeur, called in religion

Mother Innocent. She belonged to the family of that Marguerite de Blémeur, who was authoress of the "Lives of the Saints of the Order of St Benedict." She was a lady of about sixty years, short, stout, and with a voice "like a cracked pot," says the letter from which we have already quoted; but she was an excellent creature, the only merry soul in the convent, and on that account adored. She followed in the footsteps of her ancestress Marguerite, the Dacier of the order; she was lettered, learned, competent, versed in the curiosities of history, stuffed with Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and more a monk than a nun. The sub-prioress was an old Spanish nun, almost blind, Mother Cinerea. The most estimated among the "vocals" were, Mother Ste Honorine, the treasurer; Mother Ste Gertrude, first mistress of the novices; Mother Ste Ange, second mistress; Mother Annunciation, Sacristan; Mother Ste Augustine, head of the infirmary, the only unkind person in the convent; then Mother Ste Mechtilde (Mlle Gauvain), who was young, and had an admirable voice; Mother des Auges (Mlle Drouet), who had been in the convent of the Filles Dieu, and that of the Treasury near Gisors; Mother Ste Joseph (Mlle de Cogolludo); Mother Ste Adelaide (Mlle D'Auverney); Mother Miséricorde (Mlle de Cifuentes, who could not endure the privations); Mother Compassion (Mlle de La Miltière, received at the age of sixty, contrary to the rule, but very rich); Mother Providence (Mlle de Laudinière); Mother Presentation (Mlle de Siguenza), who was prioress in 1847; and lastly, Mother Ste Celigne (sister of Cerachhi the sculptor), who went mad; and Mother Ste Chantal (Mlle de Suzon), who also went mad. Among the prettiest was a charming girl of three-and-twenty, who belonged to the Bourbonnais, and was descended from the Chevalier Roze, who was called in the world Mlle Roze, and in religion Mother Assumption.

Mother Ste Mechtilde, who had charge of the singing arrangements, was glad to make use of the boarders for this purpose; she generally selected a complete musical scale, that is to say, seven assorted voices, from ten to sixteen years inclusive, whom she drew up in a line, ranging from the shortest to the tallest. In this way she produced a species of living Pandon pipes, composed of angels. The lay sisters whom the boarders liked most, were Sister Ste Euphrasie, Sister Ste Marguerite, Sister Ste Marthe, who was childish, and Sister Ste Michel, at whose long nose they laughed. All these nuns were kind to the children, and only stern to themselves; there were no fires lit except in the school-house, and the food there was luxurious when compared with that of the convent. The only thing was that when a child passed a nun and spoke to her, the latter did not



answer. This rule of silence produced the result, that in the whole convent language was withdrawn from human creatures and given to inanimate objects. At one moment it was the church bell that spoke, at another the gardener's; and a very sonorous gong, placed by the side of the sister porter, and which could be heard all through the house, indicated by various raps, which were a sort of acoustic telegraphy, all the actions of natural life which had to be accomplished, and summoned a nun, if required, to the parlour. Each person and each thing had its raps: the prioress had one and one; the sub-prioress one and two; six-five announced school hour, so that the pupils talked of going to six-five; four-four was Madame Genlis' signal, and as it was heard very often uncharitable persons said she was the "diable à quatre." Nineteen strokes announced a great event,—it was the opening of the cloister door, a terrible iron plate all bristling with bolts, which only turned on its hinges before the archbishop. With the exception of that dignitary and the gardener, no other man entered the convent, but the boarders saw two others,—one was the chaplain, Abbé Banès, an old ugly man, whom they were allowed to contemplate through a grating; while the other was M. Ansiaux, the drawing-master, whom the letter, which we have already quoted, calls "M. Anciot," and describes as an odious old hunchback. So we see that all the men were picked.

Such was this curious house.

CHAPTER VII.

POST CORDA LAPIDES.

AFTER sketching the moral figure, it may not be time lost to indicate in a few words the material configuration, of which the reader already possesses some idea.

The convent of the Little Picpus occupied a large trapeze, formed by the four streets to which we have so frequently alluded, and which surrounded it like a moat. The convent was composed of several buildings and a garden. The main building, regarded in its entirety, was a juxtaposition of hybrid constructions, which, looked at from a balloon, would very exactly form a gallows laid on the ground. The long arm of the gallows occupied the whole of the Rue Droit-mur, comprised

between the Little Rue Picpus and the Rue Polonceau, while the shorter arm was a tall, grey, stern, grated façade, looking on the Little Rue Picpus, of which the porte cochère, No. 62, was the extremity. Toward the centre of this façade dust and ashes whitened an old, low-arched gate, where the spiders made their webs, and which was only opened for an hour or two on Sundays, and on the rare occasions when the coffin of a nun left the convent; this was the public entrance to the church. The elbow of the gallows was a square room, used as an office, and which the nuns called the "buttery." In the long arm were the cells of the mothers, sisters, and novices; in the short one the kitchens, the refectory, along which a cloister ran, and the church. Between No. 62 and the corner of Aumarais lane was the school, which could not be seen from the exterior. The rest of the trapeze formed the garden, which was much lower than the level of the Rue Polonceau, and this caused the walls to be much loftier inside than out. The garden, which was slightly arched, had at its centre and on the top of a mound a fine-pointed and conical fir-tree, from which ran, as from the boss of a shield, four large walks, with eight smaller ones arranged two and two, so that, had the enclosure been circular, the geometrical plan of the walks would have resembled a cross laid upon a wheel. The walks, which all ran to the extremely irregular walls of the garden, were of unequal length, and were bordered by gooseberry bushes. At the end a poplar walk ran from the ruins of the old convent, which was at the angle of the Rue Droit-mur, to the little convent, which was at the corner of Aumarais lane. In front of the little convent was what was called the small garden. If we add to this *ensemble* a court-yard, all sorts of varying angles formed by the inside buildings, prison walls, and the long black line of roofs that ran along the other side of the Rue Polonceau, as the sole prospect, we can form an exact idea of what the house of the Bernardines of Little Picpus was five-and-forty years ago. This sacred house was built on the site of a famous racket court in the 16th century, which was called the "Tripot des onze mille diables." All these streets, indeed, were the oldest in Paris; the names Droit-mur and Aumarais are very old, but the streets that bear them are far older. Aumarais lane was before called Maugout lane; the Rue Droit-mur was called the Rue des Eglantines, for God opened the flowers before man cut building-stones.

CHAPTER VIII.

A CENTURY UNDER A WIMPLE.

As we are giving details of what was formerly the Little Picpus convent, and have ventured to let in light upon this discreet asylum, the reader will perhaps permit us another slight digression, which has nothing to do with the story, but is characteristic and useful in so far as it proves that a convent can have its original people. There was in the little convent a centenarian, who came from the Abbey of Fontevrault, and before the Revolution she had even been in the world. She talked a good deal about M. de Miromesnil, keeper of the seals under Louis XVI., and the wife of a President Duplat, who had been a great friend of hers. It was her pleasure and vanity to drag in these two names on every possible occasion. She told marvels about the Abbey of Fontevrault, which was like a town, and there were streets in the convent. She spoke with a Picard accent which amused the boarders; every year she renewed her vows, and at the moment of taking the oath would say to the priest: "Monseigneur St Francis took it to Monseigneur St Julien, Monseigneur St Julien took it to Monseigneur St Eusebius, Monseigneur St Eusebius took it to Monseigneur St Procopius, &c. &c., and thus I take it to you, father." And the boarders would laugh, not in their sleeves, but under their veils; a charming little suppressed laugh, which made the vocal mothers frown.

At other times the centenarian told anecdotes. She said that in her youth the Bernardines took precedence of the Musqueteers; it was a century that spoke, but it was the eighteenth century. She described the Champenois and Burgundian custom of the four wines before the Revolution. When a great personage, a Marshal of France, a Prince, a Duke and Peer, passed through a town of Champagne or Burgundy, the authorities addressed and presented him with four silver cups filled with four different sorts of wine. On the first cup was the inscription "ape-wine," on the second "lion-wine," on the third "sheep-wine," and on the fourth "hog-wine." These four mottoes expressed the four stages of intoxication—the first that enlivens, the second that irritates, the third that dulls, and the fourth that brutalizes.

She had a mysterious object, to which she was greatly at-

tached, locked up in a cupboard, and the rule of Fontevrault did not prohibit this. She would not show it to anybody; she locked herself in, which her rule also permitted, and hid herself each time that a desire was expressed to see it. If she heard footsteps in the passage she closed the cupboard as hastily as she could with her aged hands. So soon as it was alluded to, she, who was so fond of talking, held her tongue; the most curious persons were foiled by her silence, and the most tenacious by her obstinacy. This was a subject of comment for all the idlers and gossips in the convent. What could this precious and hidden thing be which was the centenarian's treasure? of course some pious book or unique rosary, or well-tryed relic. On the poor woman's death they ran to the cupboard, more quickly perhaps than was befitting, and opened it. They found the object under three folds of linen; it was a Faenza plate representing Cupids flying away, and pursued by apothecaries' apprentices armed with enormous squirts. The pursuit is full of comical grimaces and postures; one of the charming little Cupids is already impaled; he writhes, flutters his wings, and strives to fly away, but the assassin laughs a satanic laugh. Moral—love conquered by a cholic. This plate, which is very curious, and perhaps had the honour of furnishing Molière with an idea, still existed in September, 1845; it was for sale at a curiosity shop on the Boulevard Beaumarchais. This good old woman would not receive any visitors, "because," as she said, "the parlour is too melancholy."

CHAPTER IX.

THE END OF LITTLE PICPUS.

THIS parlour, which we have described, is a thoroughly local fact, which is not reproduced with the same severity in other convents. In the convent of the Rue du Temple, which, it is true, belonged to another order, brown curtains were substituted for the black shutters, and the parlour itself was a boarded room with white muslin curtains at the windows, while the walls admitted all sorts of pictures,—the portrait of a Benedictine nun with uncovered face, painted bouquets, and even a Turk's head. It was in the garden of this convent that the chestnut tree grew, which was considered the handsomest and largest in

France, and which had the reputation among the worthy eighteenth-century folk of being "the father of all the chestnut trees in the kingdom." As we said, this convent of the temple was occupied by Benedictines of the Perpetual Adoration, who greatly differed from those Benedictines who descended from Citeaux. This order of the Perpetual Adoration is not the oldest, and does not date back beyond two hundred years. In 1640 the Holy Sacrament was twice profaned at an interval of a few days, in two parish churches, St Sulpice and St Jean en Grève, a frightful and rare sacrilege which stirred up the whole city. The Prior Grand-Vicar of St Germain-des-Près ordered a solemn procession of all his clergy, in which the Papal Nuncio officiated, but this expiation was not sufficient for two worthy ladies, Madame Courtin, Marquise de Boucs, and the Countess de Châteaueux. This outrage done to the "most august Sacrament of the Altar," though transient, would not leave their pious minds, and it seemed to them that it could alone be repaired by a "Perpetual Adoration" in some nunnery. In 1662 and 1653 both gave considerable sums of money to Mother Catharine de Bar, called of the Holy Sacrament and a Benedictine nun, for the purpose of founding for this pious object a convent of the order of St Benedict. The first permission for this foundation was given to Mother Catharine de Bar by M. de Metz, Abbé of St Germain, "on condition that no person should be received unless she brought a pension of three hundred livres, or a capital sum of six thousand livres." After this the king granted letters-patent, which were countersigned in 1654 by the Chamber of accounts and the Parliament.

Such are the origin and legal consecration of the establishment of the Benedictines of the Perpetual Adoration of the Holy Sacrament at Paris. Their first convent was built for them in the Rue Cassette, with the funds of Mesdames de Boucs and Châteaueux. This order, as we see, must not be confounded with the Benedictines of Citeaux. It was a dependency of the Abbé of Saint Germain-des-Près, in the same manner as the ladies of the Sacred Heart are subjects of the general of the Jesuits, and the Sisters of Charity of the general of the Lazarists. It was also entirely different from the order of the Bernardines of Little Picpus, whose interior we have just shown. In 1657 Pope Alexander VII. authorized, by special brief, the Bernardines of Little Picpus to practise the Perpetual Adoration like the Benedictines of the Holy Sacrament, but the two orders did not remain the less distinct.

Toward the beginning of the Restoration Little Picpus began to pine away; it shared in the general death of the order

which, after the eighteenth century, began to decay, like all religious orders. Contemplation, like prayer, is a want of humanity; but, like all that the Revolution has touched, it will be transformed, and will become favourable to human progress, instead of being hostile to it. The house of Little Picpus became rapidly depopulated; in 1840 the little convent and the school had disappeared; there were no old women or young girls left; the former were dead, the latter had fled away. The rule of the Perpetual Adoration is so strict that it horrifies; novices hold back, and the order is not recruited. In 1845 a few lay sisters were still found here and there, but no professed nuns. Forty years ago there were nearly one hundred nuns; fifteen years ago there were only twenty-eight; how many are there now? In 1847 the prioress was young, a sign that the choice was becoming restricted. In proportion as the number diminishes the fatigue is augmented; the service of each becomes more painful; and the moment may be seen approaching at which there will be only a dozen sore and bent shoulders to bear the heavy rule of St Benedict. The burden is implacable, and remains the same for the few as for the many; it used to press, but now it crushes. Hence they die out. At the time when the author of this book still resided in Paris two died,—one twenty-five, the other twenty-three, years of age. The latter can say, like Julia Alpinula, *Hic jaceo. Vixi annos viginti et tres*. It is owing to this decadence that the convent has given up the education of girls.

We were unable to pass by this extraordinary, unknown, and obscure house without entering it, and taking with us those who are reading—we trust with some advantage to themselves—the melancholy story of Jean Valjean. We have penetrated into this community so full of those old practices which seem so novel at the present day. We have spoken of this singular spot in detail but with respect, as far as the two things are compatible. Though we may not comprehend it all, we have insulted nothing.*

* I have thought it advisable to omit here a few chapters, which the author himself calls a parenthesis, and which deal with the monastic system and the nature of prayer.—L. W.

CHAPTER X.

HOW TO GET INTO A CONVENT.

It was into this house that Jean Valjean had fallen from heaven, as Fauchelevent said. He had climbed the garden-wall which formed the angle of the Rue Polonceau; the hymn of angels which he heard in the middle of the night was the nuns chanting matins; the hall which he had caught a glimpse of in the darkness, was the chapel; the phantom he had seen stretched out on the ground was the phantom making reparation; and the bell which had so strangely surprised him was the gardener's bell fastened to Fauchelevent's knee. So soon as Cosette was in bed Jean Valjean and Fauchelevent supped on a glass of wine and a lump of cheese before a good blazing log; then, as the only bed in the cottage was occupied by Cosette, each threw himself on a truss of straw. Before closing his eyes Jean Valjean said,—“I must stop here henceforth,” and this remark trotted about Fauchelevent's head all night. In fact, neither of them slept; Jean Valjean, feeling himself discovered and Javert on his track, understood that he and Cosette were lost if they entered Paris. Since the new blast of wind had blown him into this convent Jean Valjean had but one thought, that of remaining in it. Now, for a wretch in his position, this convent was at once the most dangerous and the safest place,—the most dangerous, because as no man was allowed to enter it, if he were discovered it would be a crime, and Jean Valjean would only take one step from the convent to the prison,—the safest, because if he succeeded in remaining in it who would come to seek him there? Inhabiting an impossible spot was salvation.

On his side, Fauchelevent racked his brains. He began by declaring to himself that he understood nothing. How was M. Madeleine in spite of all the surrounding walls here?—and convent walls cannot be passed at a stride. How was he here with a child? people do not scale a perpendicular wall with a child in their arms. Who was this child? Where did they both come from? Since Fauchelevent had been in the convent he had received no news from M——, and did not know what had occurred there. Father Madeleine had that look which discourages questioning, and moreover Fauchelevent said to himself,—“A saint is not

to be cross-questioned." It was only from a few words which escaped Jean Valjean, that the gardener fancied he could come to the conclusion that M. Madeleine had probably been made bankrupt by the hard times, and was pursued by his creditors; or else, he was compromised in a political affair and was in hiding, which idea did not displease Fauchelevent, because, like most of the peasants in the north of France, he was a staunch Bonapartist. M. Madeleine had chosen the convent as his asylum, and it was simple that he should wish to remain there. But the inexplicable thing, to which Fauchelevent constantly recurred and which addled his brains, was that M. Madeleine was here, and here with this child. Fauchelevent saw them, touched them, spoke to them, and did not believe it. The gardener was stumbling among conjectures and saw nothing clear but this,—“M. Madeleine saved my life.” This sole certainty was sufficient, and decided him; he said to himself, “It is my turn now.” He added in his conscience, “M. Madeleine did not deliberate long when he had to get under the cart to save me,” and he decided upon saving M. Madeleine. He, however, asked himself several questions, to which he gave divers answers. “After what he did for me, should I save him, if he were a robber? all the same. If he were an assassin, would I save him? all the same. Since he is a saint, shall I save him? all the same.”

What a problem it was, though, to enable him to remain in the convent! Still, Fauchelevent did not recoil before this almost chimerical attempt; this poor Picard peasant, who had no other ladder but his devotion, his good-will, and a small stock of old rustic craft, this time turned to a generous purpose, undertook to scale the impossibilities of the convent, and the rough escarpments of the rule of St Benedict. Fauchelevent was an old man, who had been during life selfish, and who, at the end of his days, limping, infirm, and taking no interest in the world, found it pleasant to be grateful, and seeing a virtuous action to be done, he flung himself upon it like a man who, on the point of death, lays his hand on a glass of good wine which he had never tasted, and eagerly drinks it off. We may add, that the air which he had been breathing for some years in this convent, had destroyed his personality, and had eventually rendered some good deed a necessity for him. He, therefore, formed the resolution of devoting himself for M. Madeleine. We have just called him a “poor Picard peasant;” the qualification is correct but incomplete. At the present stage of our story a little physiological examination of Father Fauchelevent becomes useful. He was a peasant, but

he had been a notary, which added chicanery to his cunning and penetration to his simplicity. Having, through various reasons, failed in his business, he descended from a notary to be a carter and day-labourer; but in spite of the oaths and lashes necessary for horses, as it seems, something of the notary had clung to him. He had some natural wit; he did not say "I are" or "I has;" he could converse, which was a rare thing in a village, and the other peasants used to say of him, "He talks exactly like a gentleman in a hat." Fauchelevant in fact belonged to that species which the impertinent and light vocabulary of the last century qualified as "a bit of a rustic and a bit of a townsman, pepper and salt." Fauchelevant, though sorely tried, and much worn by fate, a sort of poor old threadbare soul, was still a man to act on the first impulse, and spontaneously; a precious quality which prevents a man from ever being wicked. His defects and vices, for he had such, were on the surface, and altogether his physiognomy was one of those which please the observer. His old face had none of those ugly wrinkles on the top of the forehead which signify wickedness or stupidity. At day-break, after thinking enormously, Father Fauchelevant opened his eyes and saw M. Madeleine sitting on his truss of straw, and looking at the sleeping Cosette; Fauchelevant sat up too, and said,—

"Now that you are here, how will you manage to get in?" This remark summed up the situation, and aroused Jean Valjean from his reverie. The two men held counsel.

"In the first place," said Fauchelevant, "you must begin by not setting foot outside this cottage, neither you nor the little one. One step in the garden and we are done."

"That is true."

"Monsieur Madeleine," Fauchelevant continued, "you have arrived at a very lucky moment, I ought to say, a very unhappy one, for one of our ladies is dangerously ill. In consequence of this folk will not look much this way. It seems that she is dying, and the forty hours' prayers are being said. The whole community is aroused, and that occupies them. The person who is on the point of going off is a saint. In fact, though, we are all saints here; the only difference between them and me is that they say 'our cell,' and I say 'my cottage.' There will be a service for the dying, and then the service for the dead. For to-day we shall be all quiet here; but I do not answer for to-morrow."

"Still," Jean Valjean observed, "this cottage is retired, it is hidden by a sort of ruin, there are trees, and it cannot be seen from the convent."

"And I may add that the nuns never approach it."

"Well?" Jean Valjean asked.

The interrogation that marked this 'well' signified, "I fancy that we can remain concealed here," and it was to this interrogation that Fauchelevant replied.

"There are the little ones."

"What little ones?" Jean Valjean asked.

As Fauchelevant opened his mouth to answer, a stroke rang out from a bell.

"The nun is dead," he said, "that is the knell."

And he made Jean Valjean a sign to listen. A second stroke rang out.

"It is the passing bell, Monsieur Madeleine. The bell will go on so minute after minute for twenty-four hours, till the body leaves the church. You see they play about; at recreations they need only lose a ball, and, in spite of the prohibition, they will come and look for it here and ransack everything. Those cherubs are little devils."

"Who?" Jean Valjean asked.

"The little ones; I can tell you that you would soon be discovered. They would cry out, 'Why, it's a man!' But there is no danger to-day, for there will be no recreation. The day will be spent in prayer. You hear the bell, as I told you, one stroke a minute,—it is the knell."

"I understand, Father Fauchelevant, they are boarders."

And Jean Valjean thought to himself;

"It is a chance for educating Cosette."

Fauchelevant exclaimed,—

"By Job, I should think they are boarders! they would sniff round you, and then run away. To be a man here is to have the plague, as you can see; a bell is fastened to my paw as if I were a wild beast."

Jean Valjean reflected more and more deeply. "This convent would save us," he muttered, and then added aloud,—

"Yes, the difficulty is to remain."

"No," said Fauchelevant, "it is to go out."

Jean Valjean felt the blood rush back to his heart.

"Go out?"

"Yes, M. Madeleine, in order to come in, you must go out."

And, after waiting till a knell had died out in air, Fauchelevant continued,—

"You must not be found here like that. Where do you

come from? for me, you fall from heaven, because I know you, but the nuns require that people should come in by the front door."

All at once a complicated ringing of another bell could be heard.

"Ah!" said Fauchelevent, "the vocal mothers are being summoned to a Chapter,—a Chapter is always held when any one dies. She died at daybreak, and they generally die at daybreak. But can't you go out by the way that you came in? Come, I don't want to ask you a question,—but where did you come in?"

Jean Valjean turned pale: the mere idea of going back to that formidable street made him tremble. Come out of a forest full of tigers, and once out of it just imagine a friend advising you to go in again. Jean Valjean figured to himself the police still searching in the quarter, the agents watching, vedettes everywhere, frightful fists stretched out toward his collar, and Javert perhaps in a corner lurking for his prey.

"Impossible!" he said. "Suppose, Father Fauchelevent, that I really fell from above."

"Why, I believe so," Fauchelevent continued, "you need not tell me so. Well, there is another peal; it is to tell the porter to go and warn the municipal authorities that they should send and inform the physician of the dead, so that he may come and see there is a dead woman here. All that is the ceremony of dying. The good ladies are not very fond of such visits, for a doctor believes in nothing; he raises the veil, and sometimes raises something else. What a hurry they have been in to warn the doctor this time! What is up, I wonder? Your little girl is still asleep; what is her name?"

"Cosette."

"Is she your daughter? I mean, are you her grandfather?"

"Yes."

"To get her out will be easy. I have my special door, which opens into the yard; I knock, the porter opens. I have my dorser on my back, with the little girl in it, and go out. You will tell her to be very quiet, and she will be under the hood. I will leave her for the necessary time with an old friend of mine, a fruiteress in the Rue du Chemin Vert, who is deaf, and where there is a little bed. I will shout in her ear that it is my niece, and bid her keep her for me till to-morrow; then the little one will come in with you, for I mean to bring you in again. But how will you manage to get out?"

Jean Valjean shook his head.

"The great point is that no one sees me, Father Fauchelevent. Find means to get me out in the same way as Cosette."

Fauchelevent scratched the tip of his ear with the middle finger of his left hand, which was a sign of serious embarrassment. A third peal caused a diversion.

"That is the doctor going away," said Fauchelevent. "He has had a look and said, 'She is dead, all right.' When the doctor has countersigned the passport for Paradise, the undertakers send a coffin. If it is a mother, the mothers put her in it; if a sister, the sisters; and after that I nail up. That is part of my gardening, for a gardener is a bit of a grave-digger. The coffin is placed in the vestry room which communicates with the street, and which no man is allowed to enter but the doctor, for I don't count the undertakers and myself as men. It is in this room that I nail up the coffin; the undertakers fetch it, and then—Gee-up, driver—that's the way people go to heaven. A box is brought, in which there is nothing, and it is carried off with something in it; and that's what a burial is. *De Profundis.*"

A horizontal sunbeam illumined the face of the sleeping Cosette, who opened her lips and looked like an angel imbibing light. Jean Valjean was gazing at her again, and no longer listened to Fauchelevent. Not to be heard is no reason why a man should hold his tongue, so the worthy old gardener quickly continued his chatter,—

"The grave is dug in the Vaugirard cemetery; people say that it is going to be shut up. It is an old cemetery, which has no uniform, and is going on half-pay; it is a pity, for it is convenient. I have a friend there, Father Mestrenne, the grave-digger. The nuns of this house possess the privilege of being carried to that cemetery at nightfall: they have a decree of the prefecture expressly for them. But what events since yesterday! Mother Crucifixion is dead, and Father Madeleine—"

"Is buried," Jean Valjean said, with a sad smile.

Fauchelevent marked the word.

"Well, if you were here altogether it would be a real burial."

A fourth peal rang out. Fauchelevent quickly took down his knee-cap and put it on.

"This time it is for me. The Mother Prioress wants me. There, I have pricked myself with the tongue of my buckle. M. Madeleine, don't stir, but wait for me. There is something up; if you are hungry, there is bread, wine, and cheese."

And he left the cottage, saying, "Coming, coming."

Jean Valjean watched him hurrying across the garden as rapidly as his leg would allow, while taking a side glance at his melon frames. Less than ten minutes after, Father Fauchelevont, whose bell routed all the nuns as he passed, tapped gently at a door, and a soft voice answered, "For ever, for ever," that is to say, "Come in." It was the door of the parlour reserved expressly for the gardener, and adjoining the chapter room. The prioress, seated on the only chair in the room, was waiting for Fauchelevont.

CHAPTER XI.

FAUCHELEVENT FACES THE DIFFICULTY.

To have an agitated and serious air is peculiar, on critical occasions, to certain characters and professions, and notably to priests and monks. At the moment when Fauchelevont entered, this double form of preoccupation was imprinted on the face of the Prioress, who was that charming and learned Mlle de Blêmeur, or Mother Innocent, who was usually so cheerful. The gardener gave a timid bow, and remained in the door-way of the cell; the prioress, who was telling her beads, raised her eyes, and said,—

"Oh, it is you, Father Fauvent?"

This abbreviation had been adopted in the convent. Fauchelevont began his bows again.

"Father Fauvent, I summoned you."

"Here I am, Reverend Mother."

"I wish to speak with you."

"And I, on my side," said Fauchelevont, with a boldness which made him tremble inwards, "have something to say to the most Reverend Mother."

The prioress looked at him.


"Ah! you have a communication to make to me?"

"A request."

"Well, speak."

Fauchelevont, the ex-notary, belonged to that class of peasants who possess coolness. A certain skilful ignorance is a strength; people do not suspect it, and you have them. During the two years Fauchelevont had lived in the convent,

he had made a success in the community, and while alone and attending to his gardening, he had nothing else to do than be curious. Remote as he was from all these veiled women, he saw nothing before him but an agitation of shadows, but, by constant attention and penetration, he had succeeded in putting flesh on these phantoms, and these dead lived for him. He was like a deaf man whose sight is improved, and a blind man whose hearing is sharpened. He had turned his mind to discover the meaning of the various peals, and had succeeded, so that this enigmatical and mysterious convent had nothing hidden from him; and this sphynx whispered all its secrets in his ear. Fauchelevent, while knowing everything, concealed everything, and that was his art; the whole convent believed him to be stupid, and that is a great merit in religion. The vocal mothers set value on Fauchelevent, for he was a curious dumb man and inspired confidence. Moreover, he was regular, and only went out when absolutely compelled by the claims of his orchard or kitchen garden, and this discretion was placed to his credit. But, for all that, he had made two men talk,—in the convent, the porter, and he thus knew all the peculiarities of the parlour; and at the cemetery the grave-digger, and he knew the regularities of the burial; so that he possessed a double light about these nuns,—the light of life and the light of death. But he made no abuse of his knowledge, and the congregation were attached to him. Old, lame, seeing nothing, and probably rather deaf; what qualifications! It would be difficult to fill up his place. The good man, with the assurance of a servant who knows his value, began a rustic address to the prioress, which was rather diffuse and very artful. He talked a good deal about his age, his infirmities, years henceforward, reckoning double for him, the growing demands of his work, nights to pass, as, for instance, the last, in which he was obliged to draw matting over the melon frames owing to the moon; and he ended with this, that he had a brother (the prioress gave a start) — a brother who was not young (a second start, but not so alarmed)—that if leave were granted, this brother would come and live with him and help him; that he was an excellent gardener, and would be of more use to the community than himself was; and that, on the other hand, if his brother's services were not accepted, as he, the elder, felt worn out and unequal to his work, he would be compelled, to his great regret, to give up his situation; and that his brother had a little girl whom he would bring with him, and who would be brought in the house, and might, who knew? become a nun some day. When he had finished speaking, the prioress broke



off her occupation of letting the beads of her rosary slip through her fingers, and said,—

"Could you procure a strong iron bar between this and to-night?"

"What to do?"

"To act as a lever."

"Yes, Reverend Mother," Father Fauchelevant replied.

The prioress, without adding a syllable, rose and walked into the adjoining room, where the Chapter was assembled. Fauchelevant was left alone.

CHAPTER XII.

MOTHER INNOCENT.

ABOUT a quarter of an hour passed ere the prioress came in again and sat down on her chair. The two speakers appeared pre-occupied. We will do our best to record their conversation accurately.

"Father Fauvent?"

"Reverend Mother?"

"Do you know the chapel?"

"I have a little cage in it where I hear mass and the offices."

"And have you gone into the choir for your work?"

"Two or three times."

"A stone will have to be lifted."

"What stone?"

"The one at the side of the altar."

"The stone that closes the vault?"

"Yes."

"That is a job where two men would be useful."

"Mother Ascension, who is as strong as a man, will help you."

"A woman is never a man."

"We have only a woman to help you, and everybody does the best. Although Dôm. Mabillon gives four hundred and seventeen epistles of St Bernard, and Merlonus Horstius only gives three hundred and sixty-seven, I do not despise Merlonus Horstius."

"Nor I."

"The merit is to work according to your strength. A convent is not a work-yard."

"And a woman is not a man. My brother is a strong fellow!"

"And, then, you will have a crowbar."

"It is the only sort of key that fits such locks."

"There is a ring in the stone."

"I will put the crowbar through it."

"And the stone works on hinges."

"All right, Reverend Mother, I will open the vault."

"And the four chanting mothers will help you."

"And when the vault is open?"

"You must shut it again."

"Is that all?"

"No."

"Give me your orders, most Reverend Mother."

"Fauvent, we place confidence in you."

"I am here to do everything."

"And to hold your tongue about everything."

"Yes, Reverend Mother."

"When the vault is opened—"

"I will shut it again."

"But, first—"

"What, Reverend Mother?"

"You must let down something into it."

There was a silence, and the prioress, after a pout of the lower lip, which looked like hesitation, continued,—

"Father Fauvent!"

"Reverend Mother?"

"You are aware that a mother died this morning."

"No."

"Did you not hear the bell?"

"Nothing can be heard at the end of the garden."

"Really now?"

"I can hardly distinguish my own ring."

"She died at day-break."

"And besides, this morning, the wind did not blow in my direction."

"It is Mother Crucifixion, a blessed saint."

The prioress was silent, moved her lips for a moment, as if in mental prayer, and went on,—

"Three years ago, through merely seeing Mother Crucifixion pray, a Jansenist, Madame de Bethune, became orthodox."



"Oh, yes, I hear the passing bell now, Reverend Mother."

"The mothers have carried her into the dead-room adjoining the church."

"I know."

"No other man but you can or ought to enter that room, so keep careful watch. It would be a fine thing to see another man enter the charnel house!"

"More often."

"Eh?"

"More often."

"What do you mean?"

"I say more often."

"More often than what?"

"Reverend Mother, I did not say more often than what, but more often."

"I do not understand you; why do you say more often?"

"To say the same as yourself, Reverend Mother."

"But I did not say more often."

"You did not say it, but I said it to say the same as you."

At this moment nine o'clock struck.

"At nine in the morning and every hour be the most Holy Sacrament of the altar blessed and adored," said the prioress.

"Amen," said Fauchelevent.

The hour struck opportunely, for it cut short the 'more often.' It is probable that, without it the prioress and Fauchelevent would never have got out of this tangle. Fauchelevent wiped his forehead, and the prioress gave another internal murmur, and then raised her voice.

"In her life-time Mother Crucifixion performed conversions, after her death she will perform miracles."

"She will do them," Fauchelevent said, determined not to give ground again.

"Father Fauvent, the community was blessed in Mother Crucifixion. Of course it is not granted to every one to die, like Cardinal de Berulle, while reading the Holy Mass, and exhale his soul to God while uttering the words, *Hanc igitur oblationem*. But though she did not attain such happiness, Mother Crucifixion had a very blessed death. She retained her senses up to the last moment; she spoke to us, and then conversed with the angels. She gave us her last commands; if you had more faith, and if you had been in her cell, she would have cured your leg by touching it. She smiled, and we all felt that she was living again in God,—there was Paradise in such a death."

Fauchelevant fancied that it was the end of a prayer; "Amen," he said.

"Father Fauvent, what the dead wish must be carried out."

The prioress told a few beads. Fauchelevant held his tongue; then the lady continued,—

"I have consulted on this point several Ecclesiastics, who labour in our Lord, who turn their attention to the exercise of clerical life, and reap an admirable harvest."

"Reverend Mother, the knell is heard better here than in the garden."

"Moreover, she is more than a dead woman, she is a saint."

"Like yourself, Reverend Mother."

"She slept in her coffin for more than twenty years, by express permission of our Holy Father Pius VII."

"The same who crowned the Emp— Bonaparte."

For a clever man like Fauchelevant the recollection was ill-timed. Luckily the prioress, who was deep in thought, did not hear him, and went on,—

"Father Fauvent?"

"Reverend Mother?"

"Saint Diodorus, Archbishop of Cappadocia, requested that only one word should be inscribed on his tombstone, *Acarus*, which means a worm, and it was done. Is that true?"

"Yes, Reverend Mother."

"The blessed Mezzocanes, Abbot of Aquila, wished to be buried under a gallows, and it was done."

"That is true."

"Saint Terentius, Bishop of Oporto, at the mouth of the Tiber on the sea, ordered that there should be engraved on his tombstone the symbol which was placed on the grave of parricides, in the hope that passers-by would spit on his tomb, and it was done, for the dead ought to be obeyed."

"So be it."

"The body of Bernard Guidonis, who was born in France, near Roche Abeille, was, as he ordered, and in defiance of the King of Castille, conveyed to the Church of the Dominicans of Limoges, although Bernard Guidonis was Bishop of Tuy in Spain. Can you say the contrary?"

"Certainly not, Reverend Mother."

"The fact is attested by Plantavit de la Fosse."

A few beads were told in silence, and then the prioress resumed,—

"Father Fauvent, Mother Crucifixion will be buried in the coffin in which she has slept for twenty years."

"That is but fair."

"It is a continuation of sleep."

"Then I shall have to nail her up in that coffin?"

"Yes."

"And we shall not employ the undertaker's coffin?"

"Exactly."

"I am at the orders of the most Reverend Community."

"The four singing mothers will help you."

"To nail up the coffin? I do not want them."

"No, to let it down."

"Where?"

"Into the vault."

"What vault?"

"Under the altar."

Fauchelevant started.

"The vault under the altar?"

"Yes."

"But—"

"You have an iron bar."

"Yes, still—"

"You will lift the stone by passing the bar through the ring."

"But—"

"We must obey the dead. It was the last wish of Mother Crucifixion to be buried in the vault under the chapel altar, not to be placed in profane soil, and to remain when dead at the place where she had prayed when alive. She asked this of us, indeed ordered it."

"But it is forbidden."

"Forbidden by man, ordered by God."

"Suppose it oozed out?"

"We have confidence in you."

"Oh! I am a stone of your wall."

"The chapter is assembled; the vocal mothers whom I have just consulted once again, and who are deliberating, have decided that Mother Crucifixion should be interred according to her wish, under our altar. Only think, Father Fauvent, if miracles were to take place here! what a glory in God for the community! miracles issue from tombs."

"But, Reverend Mother, supposing the Sanitary Commissioner—"

"St Benedict II. in a matter of burial resisted Constantine Pogonatus."

"Still the Inspector—"

"Chonodemairus, one of the seven German kings who entered Gaul during the empire of Constantius, expressly

recognized the right of monks to be buried in religion, that is to say, beneath the altar."

"But the Inspector of the Prefecture—"

"The world is as nothing in presence of the cross. Martin, eleventh general of the Carthusians, gave his order this device, *Stat crux dum volvitur orbis*."

"Amen!" Fauchelevent said, who imperturbably got out of the scrape in that way whenever he heard Latin.

Anybody answers an audience for a person who has been a long time silent. On the day when Gymnastoras, the rhetorician, left prison, with a great many dilemmas and syllogisms in his inside, he stopped before the first tree he came to, harangued it, and made mighty efforts to convince it. The prioress, whose tongue was usually stopped by the dam of silence, and whose reservoir was over-full, rose and exclaimed with the loquacity of a raised sluice,—

"I have on my right hand Benedict, and on my left Bernard. Who is Bernard? the first abbot of Clairvaux. Fontaines in Burgundy is a blessed spot for having witnessed his birth. His father's name was Têcelin, his mother's Alethe; he began with Citeaux to end with Clairvaux; he was ordained Abbot by William de Champeaux, Bishop of Chalons sur Saône; he had seven hundred novices, and founded one hundred and sixty monasteries; he overthrew Abeilard at the Council of Sens in 1140, and Pierre de Bruys and Henry his disciple, as well as an errant sect called the Apostolicals; he confounded Arnold of Brescia, crushed the Monk Raoul, the Jew-killer, led the Council of Reims in 1148, condemned Gilbert de la Préu, Bishop of Poitiers, and Eon de l'Etoile, settled the disputes of the princes, enlightened King Louis the young, advised Pope Eugene III., regulated the temple, preached the Crusade, and performed two hundred and fifty miracles in his life, and as many as thirty-seven in one day. Who is Benedict? he is the patriarch of Monte Cassino; he is the second founder of the claustral Holiness, the Basil of the West. His order has produced fourteen popes, two hundred cardinals, fifty patriarchs, one thousand six hundred archbishops, four thousand six hundred bishops, four emperors, twelve empresses, forty-six kings, forty-one queens, three thousand six hundred canonized saints, and still exists after one thousand four hundred years. On one side Saint Bernard, on the other the Sanitary Inspector! On one side St Benedict, on the other the Inspector of the streets! What do we know about the State, the regulations, the administration, and the public undertaker? Any witnesses would be indignant at the way in which we are

treated; we have not even the right to give our dust to Christ! your salubrity is a revolutionary invention. God subordinate to a Police Inspector, such is the age! Silence, Fauvent!"

Fauchelevant did not feel very comfortable under this douche, but the prioress continued,—

"The right of the monasteries to sepulture is indubitable, and it can only be denied by fanatics and schismatics. We live in times of terrible confusion; people do not know what they should, and know what they should not. Men are crass and impious, and there are people at the present day who cannot distinguish between the most mighty St Bernard and that Bernard called of the poor Catholics, a certain worthy ecclesiastic who lived in the 13th century. Others are so blasphemous as to compare the scaffold of Louis XVI. with the cross of our Saviour. Louis XVI. was only a king. There are no just or unjust persons left, the name of Voltaire is known and that of Cæsar de Bus unknown,—but Cæsar de Bus is blessed, while Voltaire is condemned. The last Archbishop, Cardinal de Perigord, did not even know that Charles de Gondrin succeeded Berullus, and François Bourgoin Gondrin, and Jean François Senault Bourgoin, and Father de Sainte Marthe Jean François Senault. The name of Father Coton is known, not because he was one of the three who urged the foundation of the Oratory, but because he supplied the Huguenot King Henri IV. with material for an oath. What makes people of the world like St Francis de Sales, is that he cheated at play. And, then, religion is attacked, and why? because there have been bad priests, because Sagittarius, Bishop of Gap, was brother of Salonces, Bishop of Embrun, and both followed Mommolus. Of what consequence is all this? Does it prevent Martin of Tours from being a saint, and having given one half of his cloak to a poor man? The saints are persecuted, and people close their eyes against the truth. They are accustomed to the darkness, and the most ferocious beasts are blind beasts. No one thinks of Hell for good; oh! the wicked people. 'By the king's order' means at the present day by order of the Revolution. People forget what they owe, either to the living or the dead. We are forbidden to die in holiness, the tomb is a civil office, and this is horrible. St Leon II. wrote two letters expressly,—one to Peter Notarius, the other to the King of the Visigoths, to combat and reject, in questions that affect the dead, the authority of the exarchus and the supremacy of the Emperor. Gautin, Bishop of Chalons, opposed Otho, Duke of Burgundy, in this matter. The old magistrates coincided, and we formerly had a voice in the Chapter itself upon temporal affairs. The Abbot

of Citeaux, general of the order, was Councillor by right of birth in the Parliament of Burgundy. We do what we like with our dead. Is not the body of Saint Benedict himself in France at the Abbey of Fleury, called Saint Benedict, in the Loire, although he died at Monte Cassino in Italy, on Saturday March 21, 543? All this is incontestable. I abhor the psallants, I hate the priors, I execrate heretics, but I should detest even worse any one who opposed my views in this matter. It is only necessary to read Arnoul Weon, Gabriel Bucelinus, Tritheme, Mauroleus, and Don Luc d'Achery."

The prioress breathed, and then turned to Fauchelevant. "Father Fauvent, is it settled?"

"It is, Reverend Mother."

"Can we reckon on you?"

"I will obey."

"Very good."

"I am entirely devoted to the convent."

"You will close the coffin, and the sisters will carry it into the chapel. The office for the dead will be read, and then we shall return to the cloisters. Between eleven and twelve you will come with your iron bar, and everything will be performed with the utmost secrecy: there will be no one in the chapel but the four singing mothers, Mother Ascension, and yourself."

"And the sister at the stake?"

"She will not turn round."

"But she will hear."

"She will not listen. Moreover, what the convent knows the world is ignorant of."

There was another pause, after which the prioress continued,—

"You will remove your bell, for it is unnecessary for the sister at the stake to notice your presence."

"Reverend Mother?"

"What is it, Father Fauvent?"

"Has the physician of the dead paid his visit?"

"He will do so at four o'clock to-day: the bell has been rung to give him notice. But do you not hear any ringing?"

"I only pay attention to my own summons."

"Very good, Father Fauvent."

"Reverend Mother, I shall require a lever at least six foot long."

"Where will you get it?"

"Where there are plenty of gratings there are plenty of iron bars. I have a pile of old iron at the end of the garden."

"About three quarters of an hour before midnight, do not forget."

"Reverend Mother?"

"What is it?"

"If you have other jobs like this, my brother is a strong fellow for you, a Turk."

"You will be as quick as possible."

"I cannot do things quickly, for I am infirm, and for that reason require an assistant. I halt."

"Halting is not a crime, and may be a blessing. The Emperor Henry II., who combated the Antipope Gregory and re-established Benedict VIII., has two surnames—the saint and the cripple."

"Two excellent surtouts," muttered Fauchelevent, who really was rather hard of hearing.

"Father Fauvent, now I think of it, take a whole hour, for it will not be too much. Be at the High Altar with your crowbar at eleven o'clock, for the service begins at midnight and all must be finished a good quarter of an hour previously."

"I will do everything to prove my zeal to the community. I will nail up the coffin, and be in the chapel at eleven o'clock precisely; the singing mothers and Mother Ascension will be there. Two men would be better, but no matter, I shall have my crowbar, we will open the vault, let down the coffin, and close it again. After that there will not be a trace, and the government will have no suspicion. Reverend Mother, is all arranged thus?"

"No."

"What is there still?"

"There is the empty coffin."

This was a difficulty; Fauchelevent thought of and on it and so did the prioress.

"Father Fauvent, what must be done with the other coffin?"

"It must be buried."

"Empty?"

Another silence. Fauchelevent made with his left hand that sort of gesture which dismisses a disagreeable question.

"Reverend Mother, I will nail up the coffin and cover it with the pall."

"Yes, but the bearers, while placing it in the hearse, and lowering it into the grave, will soon perceive that there is nothing in it."

"Oh, the de—!" Fauchelevent exclaimed. The prioress began a cross, and looked intently at the gardener; the *evil*

stuck in his throat, and he hastily improvised an expedient to cause the oath to be forgotten.

"Reverend Mother, I will put earth in the coffin, which will produce the effect of a body."

"You are right, for earth is the same as a human being. So you will manage the empty coffin?"

"I take it on myself."

The face of the prioress, which had hitherto been troubled and clouded, now grew serene. She made the sign of a superior dismissing an inferior, and Fauchelevant walked toward the door. As he was going out the prioress gently raised her voice.

"Father Fauvent, I am satisfied with you; to-morrow, after the interment, bring me your brother, and tell him to bring me his daughter."

CHAPTER XIII.

A PLAN OF ESCAPE.

THE strides of halting men are like the glances of squinters, they do not reach their point very rapidly. Monsieur Fauchelevant was perplexed, and he spent upwards of a quarter of an hour in returning to the garden cottage. Cosette was awake, and Jean Valjean had seated her by the fire-side. At the moment when Fauchelevant entered Jean Valjean was pointing to the gardener's *hotte* leaning in a corner, and saying to her,—

"Listen to me carefully, little Cosette. We are obliged to leave this house, but shall return to it, and be very happy. The good man will carry you out in that thing upon his back, and you will wait for me with a lady till I come to fetch you. If you do not wish Madame Thénardier to catch you again, obey and say not a word."

Cosette nodded her head gravely; at the sound Fauchelevant made in opening the door Valjean turned round.

"Well?"

"All is arranged, and nothing is so," said Fauchelevant. "I have leave to bring you in, but to bring you in you must go out. That is the difficulty; it is easy enough with the little one."

"You will carry her out?"

"Will she be quiet?"

"I answer for that."

"But you, Father Madeleine?"

And after an anxious silence Fauchelevant cried,—

"Why, go out in the same way as you came in."

Jean Valjean, as on the first occasion, confined himself to saying "Impossible!"

Fauchelevant, speaking to himself rather than to Jean Valjean, growled,—

"There is another thing that troubles me. I said that I would put earth in it, but now I come to think of it, earth instead of a body will not do, for it will move about and the men will notice it. You understand, Father Madeleine, the government will perceive the trick?"

Jean Valjean looked at him, and fancied that he must be raving; Fauchelevant continued,—

"How the deuce are you going to get out? for everything must be settled to-morrow, as the prioress expects you then."

Then he explained to Valjean that it was a reward for a service which he, Fauchelevant, was rendering the community. It was part of his duty to attend to the funerals, nail up the coffin, and assist the grave-digger at the cemetery. The nun who had died that morning requested to be buried in the coffin which served her as bed in the vault under the altar of the chapel. This was forbidden by the police regulations, but she was one of those women to whom nothing could be refused. The prioress and the vocal mothers intended to carry out the wishes of the deceased, and so, all the worse for the government. He, Fauchelevant, would nail up the coffin in the cell, lift the stone in the chapel, and let down the body into the vault. As a reward for this the prioress would admit into the house his brother as gardener, and his niece as boarder. The prioress had told him to bring his brother the next day after the pretended funeral, but he could not bring M. Madeleine in from outside if he were not there. This was his first embarrassment, and then he had a second in the empty coffin.

"What do you mean by the empty coffin?" Valjean asked.

"Why, the government coffin."

"I do not understand you."

"A nun dies, and the physician of the municipality comes and says,—'There is a nun dead.' Government sends a coffin, the next day it sends a hearse and undertaker's men to fetch the coffin and carry it to the cemetery. They will come and lift the coffin, and there's nothing in it."

"Put something in it."

"A dead person? I haven't such a thing."

"Well, then, a living one."

"Who?"

"Myself," said Jean Valjean.

Fauchelevant, who was seated, sprang up as if a shell had exploded under his chair.

"You?"

"Why not?"

Jean Valjean had one of those rare smiles which resembled a sunbeam in a wintry sky.

"You know that you said, Fauchelevant, Mother Crucifixion is dead, and I added, 'And Father Madeleine is buried.' It will be so."

"Oh, you are joking, not speaking seriously."

"Most seriously. Must I not get out of here?"

"Of course."

"I told you to find for me a *hotte* and a tilt too."

"Well?"

"The *hotte* will be of deal, and the tilt of black cloth."

"No, white cloth. Nuns are buried in white."

"All right, then, white cloth."

"You are not like other men, Father Madeleine."

To see such ideas, which are nought but the wild and daring inventions of the hulks, issue from his peaceful surrounding, and mingled with what he called "the slow pace of the convent," produced in Fauchelevant a stupor comparable to that which a passer-by would feel on seeing a whaler fishing in the gutter of the Rue St Denis. Jean Valjean went on.

"The point is to get out of here unseen, and that is a way. But just tell me, how does it all take place? where is the coffin?"

"The empty one?"

"Yes."

"In what is called the dead-house. It is upon two trestles, and covered with the pall."

"What is the length of the coffin?"

"Six feet."

"What is this dead house?"

"A ground-floor room with a grated window looking on the garden, and two doors, one leading to the church, the other to the convent."

"What church?"

"The street church, the one open to everybody."

"Have you the keys of these doors?"

"No, I have the key of the one communicating with the convent, but the porter has the other."

"When does he open it?"

"Only to let the men pass who come to fetch the body. When the coffin has gone out the door is locked again."

"Who nails up the coffin?"

"I do."

"Who places the pall over it?"

"I do."

"Are you alone?"

"No other man, excepting the doctor, is allowed to enter the dead-house. It is written on the wall."

"Could you hide me in that house to-night, when all are asleep in the convent?"

"No, but I can hide you in a dark hole opening out of the dead-house, in which I put the burial tools, of which I have the key."

"At what hour to-morrow will the hearse come to fetch the body?"

"At three in the afternoon. The interment takes place at the Vaugirard cemetery a little before nightfall, for the ground is not very near here."

"I will remain concealed in your tool-house during the night and morning. How about food? for I shall be hungry."

"I will bring you some."

"You can nail me up in the coffin at two o'clock." Fauchelevent recoiled and cracked his finger-bones.

"Oh, it is impossible!"

"Nonsense! to take a hammer and drive nails into a board?"

What seemed to Fauchelevent extraordinary was, we repeat, quite simple to Jean Valjean, for he had gone through worse straits, and any man who has been a prisoner knows how to reduce himself to the diameter of the mode of escape. A prisoner is affected by flight, just as a sick man is by the crisis which saves or destroys him, and an escape is a cure. What will not a man undergo for the sake of being cured? To be nailed up and carried in a box, to live for a long time in a packing-case, to find air where there is none, to economize one's breath for hours, to manage to choke without dying, was one of Jean Valjean's melancholy talents.

Besides, a coffin in which there is a living body, this convict's expedient, is also an imperial expedient. If we may believe the monk Austin Castillejo, it was the way employed

by Charles V., who, wishing to see La Plombes for the last time after his abdication, contrived to get her in and out of the monastery of Saint Yuste. Fauchelevant, when he had slightly recovered, exclaimed,—

“But how will you manage to breathe?”

“I will manage it.”

“In that box? why, the mere idea of it chokes me.”

“You have a gimlet. You will make a few holes round the mouth, and nail down the lid, without closing it tightly.”

“Good! and suppose you cough or sneeze?”

“A man who is escaping does not do such a thing.”

And Jean Valjean added,—

“Father Fauchelevant, we must make up our mind: I must either be captured here or go out in the hearse.”

Everybody must have noticed the fancy which cats have of stopping and sniffing in a half-opened door, and most of us have said to it, “Pray come in.” They are men who, when an incident stands half opened before them, have also a tendency to remain undecided between two resolutions, at the risk of being crushed by destiny as it hurriedly closes the adventure. The more prudent, cats though they are, and because they are cats, often incur greater danger than the more daring. Fauchelevant was of this hesitating nature; still, Jean Valjean’s coolness involuntarily mastered him, and he growled,—

“After all, there is no other way.”

Jean Valjean continued,—

“The only thing I am anxious about is what will take place at the cemetery.”

“There is the very thing I am not anxious about,” said Fauchelevant; “if you feel sure of getting out of the coffin I feel sure of getting you out of the grave. The grave-digger is a friend of mine and a drunkard of the name of Father Mestienne; he puts the dead in the grave, and I put the grave-digger in my pocket. I will tell you what will occur; we shall arrive a little before twilight, three quarters of an hour before the cemetery gates are closed. The hearse will drive up to the grave, and I shall follow, for that is my business. I shall have a hammer, a chisel, and pincers in my pocket; the hearse stops, the undertaker knots a cord round your coffin and lets you down; the priest says the prayers, makes the sign of the cross, sprinkles the holy water, and bolts; I remain alone with Father Mestienne, and he is a friend of mine, I tell you. One of two things is certain; he will either be drunk or not be drunk. If he is not drunk, I shall say to him, ‘Come and have a drain before the *Bon Coing* closes.’ I take him away, make him

drunk, which does not take long, as he has always made a beginning; I lay him under the table, take his card, and return to the cemetery without him. You will have only to deal with me. If he is drunk I shall say to him, 'Be off, I will do your work for you.' He will go, and I get you out of the hole."

Jean Valjean held out his hand, which Father Fauchelevant seized with a touching peasant devotion.

"It is settled, Father Fauchelevant. All will go well."

"Providing that nothing is deranged," Fauchelevant thought; "suppose the affair was to have a terrible ending!"

CHAPTER XIV.

A DRUNKARD IS NOT IMMORTAL.

THE next day, as the sun was setting, the few passers-by on the Boulevard du Maine took off their hats to an old-fashioned hearse, ornamented with death's head, thigh-bones, and tears. In this hearse was a coffin covered with a white pall, on which lay an enormous black cross, like a tall dead woman with hanging arms. A draped carriage, in which could be noticed a priest in his surplice, and a chorister in his red skull cap, followed. Two mutes in a grey uniform with black facings walked on the right and left of the hearse, while behind them came an old man in workman's garb, who halted. The procession proceeded toward the Vaugirard cemetery. This cemetery formed an exception to the others in Paris. It had its peculiar usages, just as it had a large gate and a side gate, which old people in the quarters, tenacious to old names, called the horseman's gate and the footman's gate. The Bernardo-Benedictines of the Little Picpus had obtained, as we have stated, permission to be buried there in a separate corner, and by night, because the cemetery had formerly belonged to their community. The grave-diggers, having thus an evening duty in summer and a night duty in winter, were subjected to special rules. The gates of Parisian cemeteries were closed at that period at sunset, and as this was a police measure the Vaugirard cemetery was subjected to it like the rest. The two gates adjoined a pavilion, built by the architect Perronet, in which the porter lived, and they were inexorably closed at the moment when the sun disappeared behind the dome of the Invalides. If any

grave-digger were detained at that moment in the cemetery, he had only one way to get out, his card, with which the undertaker's department supplied him. There was a species of letter-box in the shutter of the porter's window; the grave-digger threw his card into this box, the porter heard it fall, pulled the string, and the small gate opened. If the grave-digger had not his card he gave his name; the porter got up, recognized him, and opened the gate with his key; but in that case the grave-digger paid a fine of fifteen francs.

This cemetery, with its own regulations, was a flaw on the administrative symmetry, and it was put down shortly after 1830. The cemetery of Mont Parnasse succeeded it, and inherited the famous cabaret attached to the Vaugirard cemetery, which was known by the sign, *au bon Coin*, one side of which looked out on the drinking tables, the other on the tombs. It was what might be called a faded cemetery, and it was falling into decay; green mould was invading it, and the flowers deserted it. Respectable tradesmen did not care to be buried at Vaugirard, for it had a poverty-stricken smell. La père Lachaise, if you like! to be buried there was like having a mahogany suit of furniture. The Vaugirard cemetery was a venerable enclosure, laid out like an old French garden; in it were straight walks, box-trees, holly-trees, old tombs under old yew trees, and very tall grass. At night it was a tragical-looking spot.

The sun had not yet set when the hearse with the white pall and black cross entered the avenue of this cemetery, and the halting man who followed it was no other than Fauchelevent. The interment of Mother Crucifixion in the vault under the altar, getting Cosette out, and introducing Jean Valjean into the dead-house, had been effected without the slightest hitch.

Let us say, in passing, that the burial of Mother Crucifixion beneath the altar is to us a very venial thing, and one of those faults which resemble a duty. The nuns had accomplished it, not only without feeling troubled, but with the applause of their conscience. In a convent, what is called "the Government" is only an interference with the authorities, which admits of discussion. First comes the rule—as for the code, time enough for that. Men, make as many laws as you please, but keep them for yourselves. Rendering unto Cæsar only comes after rendering unto God, and a Prince is nothing by the side of a principle.

Fauchelevent limped after the hearse with great satisfaction; his twin plots, the one with the nuns, the other with M.

Madeleine, one for, the other against, the convent, were getting on famously. The calmness of Jean Valjean was one of those powerful tranquillities which are contagious, and Fauchelevant no longer doubted of success. What he still had to do was nothing; during the last two years he had made the grave-digger drunk a dozen times, and he played with him. He could do what he liked with Father Mestienne, and his head exactly fitted Fauchelevant's cap. The gardener's security was complete.

At the moment when the procession entered the avenue leading to the cemetery, Fauchelevant looked at the hearse with delight, and rubbed his huge hands as he said in a low voice,—“What a lark!”

All at once the hearse stopped; it had reached the gates, and the permission for burying must be shown. The undertaker conversed with the porter, and during this colloquy, which occupied two or three minutes, a stranger stationed himself behind the hearse by Fauchelevant's side. He was a sort of workman, wearing a jacket with wide pockets, and holding a spade under his arm. Fauchelevant looked at the stranger, and asked him,—

“Who are you?”

The man replied, “The grave-digger.”

If any man could survive a cannon-ball right in the middle of his chest, he would cut such a face as Fauchelevant did.

“Why, Father Mestienne is the grave-digger.”

“Was.”

“How, was?”

“He is dead.”

Fauchelevant was prepared for anything except this, that a grave-digger could die; and, yet, it is true that grave-diggers themselves die; while digging holes for others, they prepare one for themselves. Fauchelevant stood with widely-opened mouth, and had scarce strength to stammer,—

“Why, it is impossible.”

“It is the case.”

“But the grave-digger,” he went on feebly, “is Father Mestienne.”

“After Napoleon, Louis XVIII. After Mestienne, Gribier. Bustic, my name is Gribier.”

Fauchelevant, who was very pale, stared at Gribier; he was a tall, thin, livid, thoroughly funereal man. He looked like a broken-down doctor who had turned grave-digger. Fauchelevant burst into a laugh.

“Ah, what funny things do happen! Father Mestienne is

dead; little Father Mestienne is dead, but long live little Father Lenoir! Do you know who he is? a bottle of Surène, morbigou! real Paris Surène. And so Father Mestienne is dead; I feel sorry for him, as he was a jolly fellow. But you are a jolly fellow too, are you not, comrade? We will drink a glass together, eh?"

The man answered, "I have studied, and I never drink."

The hearse had set out again, and was now going along the main avenue. Fauchelevant had decreased his pace, and limped more through anxiety than infirmity. The grave-digger walked in front of him, and Fauchelevant once again surveyed this unknown Gribier. He was one of those men who, when young, look old, and who, though thin, are very strong.

"Comrade!" Fauchelevant cried.

The man turned round.

"I am the convent grave-digger."

"My colleague," the man said.

Fauchelevant, uneducated though very sharp, understood that he had to deal with a formidable species, a fine speaker; he growled,—

"So, then, Father Mestienne is dead."

The man answered, "Completely. Le bon Dieu consulted his bill-book. Father Mestienne was due, and so Father Mestienne is dead."

Fauchelevant repeated mechanically, "Le bon Dieu."

"Le bon Dieu," the man said authoritatively, "with philosophers the Eternal Father, with Jacobins the Supreme Being."

"Are we not going to form an acquaintance?" Fauchelevant stammered.

"It is formed. You are a rustic, I am a Parisian."

"People never know one another thoroughly till they have drunk together, for when a man empties his glass he empties his heart. You will come and drink with me, such an offer cannot be refused."

"Work first."

Fauchelevant thought, "It's all over with me."

They had only a few more yards to go before reaching the nuns' corner. The grave-digger added,—

"Peasant, I have seven children to feed, and as they must eat I must not drink."

And he added with the satisfaction of a serious man who is laying down an axiom,—

"Their hunger is the enemy of my thirst."

The hearse left the main avenue, and turned down a smaller

one, which indicated the immediate proximity of the grave. Fauchelevent reduced his pace, but could not reduce that of the hearse. Fortunately, the ground was saturated with winter rains, and rendered their progress slower. He drew closer to the grave-digger.

"There is such a capital Argenteuil wine," he muttered.

"Villager," the man replied, "I was not meant to be a grave-digger. My father was porter at the Prytanæum, and destined me for literature, but he was unfortunate in his speculations on the Exchange. Hence I was compelled to relinquish the profession of author, but I am still a public writer."

"Then, you are not a grave-digger?" Fauchelevent retorted, clinging to this very weak branch.

"One does not prevent the other, so I accumulate ——."

Fauchelevent did not understand the last word.

"Let us go to drink," he said.

Here a remark is necessary. Fauchelevent, however great his agony might be, proposed drinking, but did not explain himself on one point. Who was to pay? As a general rule, Fauchelevent proposed and Father Mestienne paid. A proposal to drink evidently resulted from the new situation created by the new grave-digger, and that proposal the gardener must make, but he left, not undesignedly, the proverbial quarter of an hour called Rabelais' in obscurity. However affected Fauchelevent might be, he did not feel anxious to pay.

The grave-digger continued with a grand smile, "As a man must live, I accepted Father Mestienne's inheritance. When a man has nearly completed his course of studies, he is a philosopher, and I have added the work of my arms to that of my hand. I have my writer's stall at the market in the Rue de Sèvres—you know, the umbrella market? all the cooks of the Croix Rouge apply to me, and I compose their declarations to the soldiers. In the morning I write billets-doux, in the evening I dig graves; such is life, Rustic."

The hearse went on, and Fauchelevent looked all about him with the greatest anxiety; heavy drops of perspiration fell from his forehead.

"Still," the grave-digger continued, "a man cannot serve two mistresses, and I must choose between the pick and the pen. The pick ruins my hand."

The hearse stopped; the chorister got out of the coach, and then the priest: one of the small front wheels of the hearse was slightly raised by a heap of earth, beyond which an open grave was visible.

"Here's another lark!" Fauchelevent said in consternation.

CHAPTER XV.

BETWEEN FOUR PLANKS.

WHO was in the coffin? It was, as we know, Jean Valjean, who had so contrived as to be able to live in it, and could almost breathe. It is a strange thing to what an extent security of conscience produces other security; the whole combination premeditated by Valjean had been going on since the previous evening, and was still going on excellently. He calculated, like Fauchelevent, upon Father Mestienne, and did not suspect the end. Never was a situation more critical or a calamity more perfect.

The four planks of a coffin exhale a species of terrible peace, and it seemed as if some of the repose of the dead were blended with Valjean's tranquillity. From the bottom of this coffin he had been able to follow and did follow all the phases of the formidable drama which he performed with death. A short while after Fauchelevent had finished nailing down the coffin lid, Valjean felt himself raised and then carried along. Through the cessation of the jolting he felt that they had passed from the pavement to the stamped earth, that is to say, the hearse had left the streets, and had turned into the boulevards. From the hollow sound he guessed that he was crossing the bridge of Austerlitz; at the first halt, he understood that he was entering the cemetery, and at the sound he said to himself,—“Here is the grave.”

He suddenly felt hands seize the coffin, and then noticed a rumbling grating on the planks: he guessed that a rope was being fastened round the coffin in order to let it down into the grave. After this, he felt dizzy for a while; in all probability the men had made the coffin oscillate and let the head down before the feet. He perfectly recovered when he found himself horizontal and motionless. He felt a certain amount of cold, as a chill and solemn voice was raised above him, and he heard the Latin words, which he did not understand, pass away so slowly that he could distinguish each in turn.

Qui dormiunt in terræ pulvere, evigilabunt; alii in vitam æternam, et alii in opprobrium, ut videant semper.

A boyish voice said,—*De profundis.*

The grave voice began again,—

Requiem æternam dona ei, Domine.

The boyish voice replied,—

Et lux perpetua luceat ei!

He heard something like the gentle plash of rain upon the coffin lid; it was, probably, the holy water. He thought, "It is finished; and I only need a little patience. The priest will go away, and Fauchelevent take Mestienne off to drink. I shall be left here till Fauchelevent returns alone, and I shall get out. It will take about an hour."

The grave voice continued,—

Requiescat in pace.

And the boyish voice said,—

Amen.

Jean Valjean, who was listening attentively, heard something like the sound of retreating footsteps.

"They are going away," he thought. "I am alone." All at once he heard over his head a noise which appeared to him like a thunder-clap; it was a spade full of earth falling on the coffin,—a second spade-full fell, and one of the holes by which he breathed was stopped,—a third shovel-full fell and then a fourth. There are some things stronger than the strongest man, and Jean Valjean lost his senses.

CHAPTER XVI.

FAUCHELEVENT HAS AN IDEA.

THIS is what took place above the coffin which contained Jean Valjean. When the hearse had gone away, when the priest and the chorister had driven off in the coach, Fauchelevent, who did not once take his eyes off the grave-digger, saw him stoop down and seize his spade, which was standing upright in the heap of earth. Fauchelevent formed a supreme resolution: he placed himself between the grave and the digger, folded his arms, and said,—

"I'll pay."

The grave-digger looked at him in amazement, and replied,—

“What, peasant?”

Fauchelevont repeated, “I’ll pay for the wine.”

“What wine?”

“The Argenteuil.”

“Where is it?”

“At the Bon Coing!”

“Go to the deuce,” said the grave-digger.

And he threw a spade-full of earth on the coffin, which produced a hollow sound. Fauchelevont tottered, and was himself ready to fall into the grave. He cried, in a voice with which a death-rattle was beginning to be mingled,—

“Come along, mate, before the Bon Coing closes.”

The grave-digger filled his spade again, and Fauchelevont continued, “I’ll pay.”

And he seized the grave-digger’s arm.

“Listen to me, mate; I am the convent grave-digger, and have come to help you. It is a job which can be done by night, so let us begin by going to have a drain.”

And while speaking, while clinging to this desperate pressing, he made the melancholy reflection, “And suppose he does drink, will he get drunk?”

“Provincial,” said the grave-digger, “since you are so pressing, I consent. We will drink, but after work, not before.”

And he raised his spade, but Fauchelevont restrained him.

“It is Argenteuil wine.”

“Why,” said the grave-digger, “you must be a bell-ringer; ding, dong, ding dong. You can only say that. Go and have yourself pulled.”

And he threw the second shovel-full. Fauchelevont had reached that moment when a man is no longer aware of what he says.

“But come and drink,” he cried, “since I offer to pay.”

“When we have put the child to bed,” said Gribier.

He threw the third spade-full and then added, as he dug the shovel into the ground,—

“It will be very cold to-night! and the dead woman would hallo after us if we were to leave her here without a blanket.”

At this moment the grave-digger stooped to fill his spade and his jacket pocket gaped. Fauchelevont’s wandering glance fell mechanically into his pocket and remained there. The sun was not yet hidden by the horizon, and there was still suffi-

cient light to distinguish something white at the bottom of this gaping pocket.

All the brightness of which a Picard peasant's eye is capable glistened in Fauchelevent's,—an idea had struck him. Unnoticed by the grave-digger, he thrust his hand into his pocket from behind, and drew out the white thing at the bottom. The grave-digger threw the fourth shovel-full into the grave, and as he hurried to raise a fifth, Fauchelevent looked at him with profound calmness, and said,—

"By the way, my novice, have you your card?"

"What card?"

"The sun is just going to set."

"Very good, it can put on its night-cap."

"The cemetery gates will be shut."

"Well, and what then?"

"Have you your card?"

"Ah, my card!" the grave-digger said: and he felt in one pocket and then in another, he passed to his fobs and turned them inside out.

"No," he said, "I have not got my card, I must have forgotten it."

"Fifteen francs fine," said Fauchelevent.

The grave-digger turned green, for the pallor of livid men is green.

"Oh Lord, have mercy upon me," he exclaimed; "fifteen francs fine!"

"Three one hundred sous piece," said Fauchelevent.

The grave-digger let his shovel fall, and Fauchelevent's turn had arrived.

"Come, conscript," said the old gardener, "no despair; you need not take advantage of the grave to commit suicide. Fifteen francs are fifteen francs, and, besides, you can avoid paying them. I am old and you a new-comer, and I am up to all the tricks and dodges. I will give you a piece of friendly advice. One thing is clear, the sun is setting, it is touching the dome, and the cemetery will shut in five minutes."

"That is true."

"Five minutes will not be enough for you to fill up this grave, which is deuced deep, and reach the gates in time to get out before they close."

"Perfectly correct."

"In that case, fifteen francs fine. But you have time,—where do you live?"

"Hardly a quarter of an hour's walk from here, at No. 87, Rue de Vaugirard."

"You have just time enough to get out, if you look sharp."

"So I have."

"Once outside the gates, you will gallop home and fetch your card, and when you return the porter will open the gate for you gratis. And you will bury your dead woman, whom I will stop from running away during your absence."

"I owe you my life, peasant."

"Be off at once," said Fauchelevent.

The grave-digger, who was beside himself with gratitude, shook his hand and ran off.

When he had disappeared behind a clump of trees, Fauchelevent listened till his footsteps died away, then bent over the grave, and said in a low voice,—“Father Madeleine!”

There was no reply. Fauchelevent trembled: he tumbled all of a heap into the grave, threw himself on the coffin-lid, and cried,—


“Are you there?”

There was silence in the coffin, and Fauchelevent, who could not breathe for trembling, took out his cold chisel and hammer and prized off the coffin-lid. He could see Jean Valjean's face in the gloom, pale, and with the eyes closed. The gardener's hair stood on an end; he got up, and then fell against the side of the grave. He gazed at Jean Valjean, who lay livid and motionless. Fauchelevent murmured in a voice faint as a breath, “He is dead!”

And drawing himself up, he folded his arms so violently that his clenched fists struck his shoulders, and cried, “That is the way in which I save him!”

Then the poor old man began sobbing and soliloquizing, for it is a mistake to suppose that there is no soliloquy in nature. Powerful agitations often talk aloud.

“It is Father Mestienne's fault. Why did that ass die? Had he any occasion to go off the hooks so unexpectedly? It is he who has killed Monsieur Madeleine. Father Madeleine! he is in his coffin, and it is all over with him. Has such a thing as this any common sense? oh my goodness, he is dead! Well, and what shall I do with his little girl? What will the greengrocer say? Is it possible that such a man can die in such a way? When I think how he got under my cart! Father Madeleine! Father Madeleine! By Heaven, he is suffocated, as I said he would be, and he would not believe me. Well! this is a pretty trick of my performance. The worthy man is dead, the best man among all God's good people; and his little one! Well, I shan't go back to the convent, but stop here. To have done such a thing as this!



it is not worth while being two old men to be two old fools. But how did he manage to get into the convent? that was the beginning, and a man ought not to do things like that. Father Madeleine, Madeleine, Monsieur Madeleine, Monsieur le Maire! He does not hear me. Get out of it now as best you can."

And he tore his hair. A shrill grating sound was audible at a distance through the trees: it was the closing of the cemetery gate. Fauchelevent bent over Jean Valjean, and all at once bounded back to the further end of the grave—Jean Valjean's eyes were open and staring at him.

If seeing a death is fearful, seeing a resurrection is nearly as frightful. Fauchelevent became like stone. He was pale, haggard, confounded by such excessive emotion, not knowing if he had to do with a dead man or a living man, and looking at Jean Valjean, who looked at him.

"I was falling asleep," said Valjean.

And he sat up. Fauchelevent fell on his knees.

"Holy Virgin! how you frightened me!"

Then he rose and cried,—*"Thank you, Father Madeleine!"*

Jean Valjean had only fainted, and the fresh air aroused him again. Joy is the reflux of terror, and Fauchelevent had almost as much difficulty in recovering himself as had Jean Valjean.

"Then you are not dead! oh, what a clever fellow you are! I called to you so repeatedly that you came back. When I saw your eyes closed, I said, 'There, he is suffocated!' I should have gone stark mad, fit for a strait waistcoat, and they would have put me in Bicêtre. What would you have me do if you were dead? and your little girl? the greengrocer's wife would not have understood it at all. A child is left upon her hands, and the grandfather is dead! What a story! oh, my good saints in Paradise, what a story! Well, you are alive, that's the great thing."

"I am cold," said Valjean.

This remark completely recalled Fauchelevent to the reality, which was urgent. These two men, who had scarce recovered, had a troubled mind, they knew not why, which emanated from the gloomy place where they were.

"Let us get out of this at once," said Fauchelevent.

He felt in his pocket and produced a flask.

"But a dram first," he said.

The flask completed what the fresh air had begun. Valjean drank a mouthful of spirits and regained perfect possession of himself. He got out of the coffin, and helped Fauchelevent to nail on the lid again: three minutes later they were out of the grave.

Fauchelevont was calm, and took his time. The cemetery was closed, and there was no fear of Gribier returning. That "conscript" was at home, busily seeking his card, and prevented from finding it because it was in Fauchelevont's pocket. Without it he could not return to the cemetery. Fauchelevont took the spade, and Valjean the pick, and they together buried the empty coffin. When the grave was filled up, Fauchelevont said,—

"Come along: you carry the pick and I will carry the spade."

Jean Valjean felt some difficulty in moving and walking, for in the coffin he had grown stiff, and become to some extent a corpse. The rigidity of death had seized upon him between these four planks, and he must, so to speak, become thawed.

"You are stiff," said Fauchelevont, "it is a pity that I am a cripple, or we would have a run."

"Nonsense," said Valjean, "half a dozen strides will make my legs all right again."

They went along the avenues by which the hearse had passed, and, on reaching the gate, Fauchelevont threw the grave-digger's card into the box; the porter pulled the string, and they went out.

"How famously it has all gone," said Fauchelevont; "it was an excellent idea you had, Father Madeleine!"

They passed through the Vaugirard barrier in the simplest way in the world, for, in the vicinity of a cemetery, a spade and a pick are two passports. The Rue de Vaugirard was deserted.

"Father Madeleine," Fauchelevont said, as they walked along, "you have better eyes than I have, so show me No. 87."

"Here it is," said Valjean.

"There is no one in the street," Fauchelevont continued, "give me the pick, and wait for me a couple of minutes."

Fauchelevont entered No. 87, went right to the top, guided by that instinct which ever leads the poor man to the garret, and rapped at a door in the darkness. A voice replied, "Come in." It was Gribier's voice.

Fauchelevont pushed the door. The grave-digger's room was like all these wretched abodes, an impoverished and crowded garret. A packing case—possibly a coffin—occupied the place of a chest of drawers, a butter-jar was the water-cistern, a palliasse represented the bed, while the floor filled the place of chairs and table. In one corner, on an old ragged piece of carpet, were a thin woman and a heap of children. The whole of this poor interior displayed signs of a convulsion, and it

seemed as if an earthquake "for one" had taken place there. The blankets were torn away, the rags scattered about, the jug was broken, the mother had been crying, and the children probably beaten,—there were evident signs of an obstinate and savage search. It was plain that the grave-digger had been wildly looking for his card, and made everything in the garret responsible for it, from his jug to his wife. He looked desperate, but Fauchelevent was too eager to notice this sad side of his success: he went in, and said, "I have brought you your spade and pick."

Gribier looked at him in stupefaction.

"Is it you, peasant?"

"And to-morrow morning you will find your card with the porter of the cemetery."

And he placed the shovel and pick on the ground.

"What does this mean?" Gribier asked.

"It means that you let your card fall out of your pocket, that I found it on the ground when you had left, that I have buried the dead woman, filled up the grave, done your work, the porter will give you your card, and you will not pay fifteen francs. That's what it is, conscript!"

"Thanks, villager," said Gribier, quite dazzled, "next time I will pay for a bottle."

CHAPTER XVII.

A SUCCESSFUL EXAMINATION.

AN hour later two men and a child presented themselves in the darkness of night at No. 69, Little Rue Picpus. The elder of the two men raised the knocker and rapped.

The two men had fetched Cosette from the greengrocer's, where Fauchelevent had left her on the previous evening. Cosette had spent the four-and-twenty hours in understanding nothing, and silently trembling; she trembled so greatly that she had not cried, nor had she eaten or slept. The worthy greengrocer had asked her a hundred questions, but had only obtained as answer a gloomy look, ever the same. Cosette did not breathe a syllable of what she had seen or heard during the last two days, for she guessed that she was passing through a crisis, and felt deeply that she must be "good." Who has

not experienced the sovereign power of the words, "say nothing," uttered with a certain accent in the ear of a little startled being? Fear is dumb; besides, no one can keep a secret like a child.

The only thing was, that when she saw Jean Valjean again after these mournful four-and-twenty hours, she uttered such a cry of joy that any thoughtful person who had heard it would have divined in this cry an escape from a gulf.

Fauchelevant belonged to the convent, and knew all the pass-words; hence doors readily opened to him, and thus was solved the double and startling problem, "how to get in, and how to get out." The porter, who had his instructions, opened the little gate which communicated between the court-yard and the garden, in the wall of the former facing the gate-way, which might still be seen from the street twenty years ago. The porter showed them all three through this gate, and thence they reached the inner private parlour where Fauchelevant had received the orders of the prioress on the previous day.

The prioress was waiting for them, rosary in hand, and a vocal mother, with her veil down, was standing near her. A discreet candle lit up, or, to speak more correctly, pretended to light up, the parlour. The prioress took a thorough look at Jean Valjean, for no eye examines like a drooping one. Then she questioned him.

"Are you the brother?"

"Yes, Reverend Mother," Fauchelevant answered.

"What is your name?"

Fauchelevant answered: "Ultime Fauchelevant."

He had really had a brother of that name, who was dead.

"Where do you come from?"

Fauchelevant. "From Picquigny near Amiens."

"What is your age?"

F. "Fifty."

"What is your trade?"

F. "Gardener."

"Are you a good Christian?"

F. "All the members of our family are so."

"Is this little girl yours?"

F. "Yes, Reverend Mother."

"Are you her father?"

F. "Her grandfather."

The vocal mother said to the prioress in a whisper, "He answers well."

Jean Valjean had not said a word. The prioress looked attentively at Cosette, and whispered to the vocal mother, "She will be ugly."

The two mothers consulted for a few minutes in a very low voice in a corner of the parlour, and then the prioress turned and said,—

“Father Fauvent, you will get another knee-cap and bell, for we shall require two in future.”

On the morrow two bells were really heard in the garden, and the nuns could not resist the temptation of raising a corner of their veils. They could see under the shade of the trees two men digging side by side, Fauvent and another. It was an enormous event, and silence was so far broken that they whispered, “It is an assistant gardener,” while the vocal mothers added, “It is a brother of Father Fauvent’s.”

Jean Valjean was in fact permanently installed; he had the leathern knee-cap and bell, and was henceforth official. He called himself *Ultime Fauchelevant*. The most powerful determining cause of his admission was the remark of the prioress with reference to Cosette,—*she will be ugly*. The prioress, once she had prognosticated this, felt an affection for Cosette, and gave her a place in the boarding-school. This is very logical after all; for, although there may be no looking-glasses in a convent, women are conscious of their face. Now, girls who feel themselves pretty have a disinclination to take the veil, and as profession is generally in an inverse ratio to the beauty, more is hoped from ugly than from pretty girls.

All this adventure aggrandized Fauchelevant, for he had a three-fold success,—with Jean Valjean, whom he saved and sheltered; with Gribier, who said to himself, he saved me fifteen francs; and with the convent, which, thanks to him, while keeping the coffin of Mother Crucifixion under the altar, eluded Cæsar and sanctified God. There was a coffin with a body at the Little Picpus, and a coffin without a body in the Vaugirard cemetery; public order was doubtless deeply affected by this, but did not perceive the fact. As for the convent, its gratitude to Fauchelevant was great; he became the best of servants, and most precious of gardeners. On the archbishop’s very next visit the prioress told the whole affair to the Grandeur, partly in confusion, and partly in a boastful spirit. The archbishop, on leaving the convent, spoke about it, applaudingly and in a whisper, to M. de Latil, Confessor to Monseigneur, and afterwards Archbishop of Reims and Cardinal. The admiration felt for Fauchelevant travelled all the way to Rome, and we have seen a letter addressed by the then reigning Pope, Leo XII., to one of his relatives, Monsignore, in the Paris Nunciature, and called, like himself, Della Genga, in which were the following lines,—“It appears that there is at a convent in Paris an

excellent gardener, who is a holy man, of the name of Fauvan." Nothing of all this triumph reached Fauchelevent in his hut ; he went on grafting, hoeing, and covering his melon beds, quite unaware of his excellence and sanctity. He no more suspected his glory than does a Durham or Surrey steer whose portrait is published in the *Illustrated London News*, with the inscription "The ox that gained the short-horn prize."

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN THE CONVENT.

CosETTE in the convent continued to be silent. She naturally thought herself Valjean's daughter, but as she knew nothing, she could say nothing, and in any case would have said nothing, as we have remarked ; for nothing trains children to silence like misfortune. Cosette had suffered so greatly that she feared everything, even to speak, even to breathe, for a word had so often brought down an avalanche upon her ! She had scarce begun to grow reassured since she had belonged to Jean Valjean, but she grew very soon accustomed to the convent. The only thing she regretted was Catherine, but she did not dare say so ; one day, however, she remarked to Valjean, "If I had known, I would have brought her with me."

Cosette, on becoming a boarder at the convent, was obliged to assume the garb of the pupils of the house. Jean Valjean begged, and obtained the old clothes she left off ; the same mourning clothes he made her put on when he removed her from the Thénardiens', and they were not much worn. Jean Valjean placed these clothes and her shoes and stockings, with a quantity of camphor and other odorous drugs with which convents abound, in a small valise which he managed to procure. He placed this valise on a chair by his bed-side, and always had the key about him.

"Father," Cosette asked him one day, "what is that box which smells so nice ?"

Father Fauchelevent, in addition to the glory we have described and of which he was ignorant, was rewarded for his good deed ; in the first place, he was happy, and, in the second place, he had much less to do, owing to the division of labour. Lastly, as he was very fond of snuff, he had from M. Madeleine's

presence the advantage that he took thrice as much as before, and in a far more voluptuous manner, because M. Madeleine paid for it.

The nuns did not adopt the name of *Ultime*; they called Jean Valjean "the other Fauvent." Had these holy women had any of Javert's temper about them, they must have noticed that when anything had to be procured from outside for the garden it was always the elder Fauvent, the cripple, who went out, and never the other; but either because eyes constantly fixed on God know not how to spy, or because they preferred to watch one another, they paid no attention to the fact. However, Jean Valjean did quite right in keeping shy and not stirring, for Javert watched the quarter for a whole month.

This convent was to Jean Valjean like an island surrounded by gulfs, and these four walls were henceforth the world for him; he saw enough of the sky there to be secure, and enough of Cosette to be happy. He lived with old Fauchelevent in the hovel at the end of the garden. This lath and plaster tenement, which still existed in 1825, was composed of three rooms which had only the bare walls. The largest room was surrendered by force, for Jean Valjean resisted in vain, by Father Fauchelevent to M. Madeleine. The wall of this room had for ornament, in addition to the two nails for hanging up the knee-cap and the *hotte*, a Royalist note for ten livres, date '93, fastened above the mantel-piece. This Vendean assignat had been nailed to the wall by the previous gardener, an ex-chouan, who died in the convent, and was succeeded by Fauchelevent.

Jean Valjean worked daily in the garden, and was very useful. As he had once been a pruner he was glad to become a gardener. It will be remembered that he had a great number of receipts and secrets which he turned to a profit; nearly all the trees in the orchard were wild stocks, but he grafted them, and made them produce excellent fruit.

Cosette had permission to spend an hour daily with him, and as the sisters were sad and he was kind, the child compared them and adored him. At the fixed hour she ran to the cottage, and when she entered it filled it with paradise. Jean Valjean expanded, and felt his own happiness grow with the happiness which he caused Cosette. The joy which we inspire has this charming thing about it, that far from being weakened, like ordinary reflections, it returns to us more radiant than before. In her hours of recreation Jean Valjean watched her from a distance, playing and running, and distinguished her laugh from that of the others, for Cosette now

laughed. Her face had also changed to a certain extent, for laughter is the sun which drives winter from the human face. When Cosette returned to her studies Jean Valjean watched the windows of her school-room, and at night would rise to gaze at the windows of her dormitory.

God has His inscrutable designs, and the convent contributed, like Cosette, to maintain and complete the Bishop's work in Jean Valjean. It is certain that one of the sides of virtue leads to pride, and there is a bridge built there by the demon. Jean Valjean was perhaps unconsciously very near this bridge when Providence threw him into the convent of the Little Picpus. So long as he had only compared himself with the Bishop, he had found himself unworthy, and had been humble, but for some time past he had been beginning to compare himself with men, and pride was growing up. Who knows whether he might not have ended by gently returning to hatred ?

The convent checked him on this slope ; it was the second place of captivity which he had seen. In his youth, in what had been to him the commencement of life, and again very recently, he had seen another, a frightful spot, a terrible spot, whose severities had ever appeared to him to be the iniquity of justice and the crime of the law. At the present day after the hulks he saw the convent, and reflecting that he had been a member of the galleys and was now, so to speak, a spectator of the convent, he anxiously confronted them in his thoughts.

At times he leant on his spade, and fell into a profound reverie. He recalled his old comrades ; how wretched they were ! They rose at dawn and worked till night ; they were scarce granted time to sleep ; they lay down on camp beds and were only allowed mattresses two inches thick ; their rooms were only warmed in the severest months of the year ; they were dressed in hideous red jackets ; they were allowed, as an indulgence, canvas trowsers in the great heat, and a woollen bandage on their back in the severe cold ; they only ate meat and drank wine when they worked on fatigue parties ; they lived without names, solely designated by numbers, lowering their eyes, lowering their voice, with shorn hair, under the stick, and in disgrace.

Then his thoughts turned to the beings whom he had before him. These beings also lived with cropped hair, downcast eyes, and a low voice, not in disgrace, but amid the mockery of the world, and if their backs were not bruised by a stick, their shoulders were lacerated by the discipline. Their names had vanished too among human beings, and they only existed under severe appellations. They never ate meat

nor drank wine; they often remained without food till night; they were dressed, not in a red jacket, but in a black woollen pall, heavy in summer and light in winter, and were unable to reduce it or add to it at all, and they wore for six months in the year serge chemises, which caused them a fever. They slept not in rooms warmed merely in the severe cold, but in cells in which fires were never kindled; they slept not on mattresses two inches thick, but on straw; lastly, they were not even allowed to sleep; every night, after a day of labour, they were compelled to get up, dress themselves, and go and pray in a freezing dark chapel, with their knees upon the stones. On certain days, moreover, each of these beings was obliged, in turn, to remain for twelve hours prostrate on the ground, with her arms extended like a cross.

The former were men; the latter were women. What had the men done? they had robbed, violated, plundered, killed, assassinated. They were bandits, forgers, poisoners, incendiaries, murderers, and parricides. What had these women done? nothing. On one side, brigandage and fraud, cozening, violence, lubricity, homicide, every sort of sacrilege, every variety of crime: on the other, only one thing,—innocence, perfect innocence, which was still attached to the earth by virtue, and already attached to heaven by holiness. One side, confessions of crimes made in a whisper; on the other, confessions of faults made aloud. And what crimes, and what faults! On one side miasmas, on the other an ineffable perfume; on one side a moral pestilence, closely guarded, held down by cannon, and slowly devouring its plague-sufferers; on the other, a chaste kindling of all the souls on the same hearth. There darkness, here shadow, but a shadow full of light, and light full of radiance.

They were two places of slavery, but in the former there was a possible deliverance, a constantly visible legal limit, and, besides, escape—in the second, perpetuity, the only hope being that gleam of liberty which men call death, upon the extreme horizon. In the former people were only held by chains, in the latter by faith. What emerged from the former? an immense curse, gnashing of teeth, hatred, desperate wickedness, a cry of rage against human society, and sarcasms hurled at heaven. What issued from the latter? blessings, love. And in these two places, which were so similar, and yet so varying, these two so different species of beings accomplished the same work of expiation.

Jean Valjean perfectly understood the expiation of the former, as personal, but he did not understand the expiation of the others, of these creatures who were without reproach or stain, and he asked himself with trembling: expiation for what?

A voice answered in his conscience; the most divine proof of human generosity, Expiation for others.

Here we lay aside any and every personal theory; we are only the narrator, we are standing in Jean Valjean's place, and transferring his impressions. He had before his eyes the sublime summit of abnegation, the highest pinnacle of possible virtue, that innocence which forgives men their faults, and expiates them in their place; servitude endured, torture accepted, punishment demanded by souls which have not sinned, that they may absolve souls which have erred; the love of humanity swallowed up in the love of God, but remaining distinct and suppliant in it; gentle, feeble beings who have the wretchedness of those who are punished and the smile of those who are rewarded.

And he remembered that he had dared to complain. He often rose in the middle of the night to listen to the grateful song of these innocent creatures, weighed down by severity, and his blood ran cold when he thought that men who were justly chastised only raised their voices to Heaven to blaspheme, and that he, wretch as he was, had threatened God. It was a striking thing, which made him reflect deeply, and imagine it a warning of Providence, that all the things he had done to escape from the other place of expiation, such as climbing walls, difficulties, dangerous adventures, and risks of death, he had gone through again, in entering the present place. Was it a symbol of his destiny?

This house was a prison too, and bore a mournful likeness to the other abode from which he had fled, and yet he had never had such an idea here. He saw again the bars, bolts, and iron bars, to guard whom? angels. The lofty walls which he had seen around tigers he saw again around lambs.

It was a place of expiation, and not of punishment, and yet it was even more austere, gloomy, and pitiless than the other. These virgins were more harshly bowed than the galley slaves: a rough, cold wind, the wind which had chilled his youth, blew through the barred and pad-locked cage of the vultures; but a sharper and more painful wind passed through the cotes of these doves.

Why was this?

When he thought of these things, all within him bowed down before this mystery of sublimity. In these meditations pride vanished: he felt himself insignificant, and wept many times: all that had entered his life during the past six months, led him back to the Bishop's holy injunctions,—Cosette by love, the convent by humility.

At times in those hours of the night when the garden

was deserted, he might have been seen kneeling in front of that window through which he had gazed on the night of his arrival, turned towards the spot where he knew that the sister who was making reparation was prostrated in prayer. He prayed thus kneeling before this sister—it seemed as if he dared not kneel directly to God.

All that surrounded him, this peaceful garden, these fragrant flowers, these children uttering merry cries, these grave and simple women, these silent cloisters, slowly penetrated him, and gradually his soul was composed of silence like this cloister, of perfume like these flowers, of peace like this garden, of simplicity like these women, and of joy like these children. And then he thought how two houses of God had in turn received him at the two critical moments of his life, the first when all doors were closed and human society repulsed him, the second at the moment when human society was beginning to hunt him down again, and the hulks were yawning for him; and that, had it not been for the former, he would have fallen back into crime, and but for the latter, into punishment. All his heart melted into gratitude, and he loved more and more.

Several years passed thus, and Cosette grew.

CHAPTER XIX.

PARVULUS.

PARIS has a child and the forest has a bird; the bird is called a sparrow, the child is called a gamin. Couple these two ideas, the one which is all furnace, the other all dawn; bring the two sparks, Paris and childhood, into collision, and a little being is produced, a homuncio, as Plautus would say.

This little being is joyous; he does not eat every day, and he goes to the theatre every night if he thinks proper. He has no shirt on his body, no shoes on his feet, and no covering on his head; he is like the flies, which have none of those things. He is from seven to thirteen years of age, lives gregariously, lodges in the open air, wears an old pair of his father's trousers, which descend lower than his heels, an old hat belonging to some other father, which comes below his ears, and one yellow list brace. He runs, watches, begs, kills time, colours pipes, swears like a fiend, haunts the wine-shop, knows thieves, is intimate

with prostitutes, talks slang, sings filthy songs, and has nothing bad in his heart; for he has in his soul a pearl, Innocence; and pearls are not dissolved by mud. So long as the man is a child, God desires that he should be innocent. If we were to ask the enormous city, "What is this creature?" it would reply, "It is my little one."

The gamin of Paris is the dwarf of the giantess. Let us not exaggerate: this cherub of the gutter has sometimes a shirt, but in that case has only one; he has shoes at times, but then they have no soles; he has at times a home, and likes it, for he finds his mother there; but he prefers the street, because he finds liberty there. He has games of his own, and his own tricks, of which hatred of the respectable class constitutes the basis, and he has metaphors of his own,—thus, to be dead, he calls eating dandelions by the root. He has trades of his own, fetching hackney coaches, letting down steps, pulling a board across the gutters in heavy showers, and shouting out speeches made by the authorities in favour of the French people. He has also a currency of his own, composed of all the little pieces of copper that can be picked up in the streets. This curious money, which takes the name of *loques*, has an unvarying and well-established value in this childish Bohemia.

Lastly, he has a fauna of his own, which he studiously observes in every hole and corner,—the Lady-bird, the death's-head moth, the daddy long-legs, and the "devil," a black insect which threatens by writhing its tail, and which is armed with two horns. He has his fabulous monster, which has scales on its belly, and is not a lizard, and spots on its back, but is not a frog; it lives in holes in old lime-kilns and dried-up wells; it is black, hairy, slimy, and crawls about, at one moment slowly, at another quickly; it utters no sound, but looks so terrible that no one has ever seen it. This monster he calls the "dragon," and looking for it under stones is a pleasure of a formidable nature. Another pleasure is suddenly to raise a paving-stone and look at the wood-lice. Every region of Paris is interesting for the celebrated "finds" which may be made in them; thus, there are ear-wigs in the timber-yards of the Ursulines, centipedes at the Pantheon, and tadpoles in the ditches of the Champs de Mars.

As for witticisms, this child is as full of them as Talleyrand; but though no less cynical, he is more honest. He is gifted with an unforeseen joviality, and startles the shop-keeper by his mad laugh. His range extends from genteel comedy to farce. A funeral passes, and among the persons following is a physician. "Hilloh!" shouts a gamin, "when did the doctors begin to carry home their own work?"

Another is in a crowd. A serious man, adorned with spectacles and watch seals, turns indignantly : " You scoundrel, what do you mean by taking my wife's waist ? " " I, sir ? search me ! "

CHAPTER XX.

HE IS AGREEABLE.

At night, thanks to a few half-pence which he always contrives to procure, the homuncio enters a theatre. On crossing this magical threshold he becomes transfigured ; he was a gamin, and he becomes the *titi*. Theatres are like overturned vessels, which have their keel in the air, and the *titis* congregate in the hold. The *titi* is to the gamin as the butterfly to the chrysalis, —the same being, but now flying and hovering. It is sufficient for him to be present, with his radiant happiness, his power of enthusiasm and delight, and the clapping of his hands, which resembles the flapping of wings—and the narrow, fetid, obscure, dirty, unhealthy, hideous, abominable hold is at once called Paradise.

Give a being what is useless, and deprive him of what is necessary, and you will have the gamin. He possesses some literary intuition, and his tastes, we confess it with all proper regret, are not classical. He is by nature but little of an academician.

This being bawls, shouts, ridicules, and fights ; wears patches like a babe, and rags like a philosopher ; fishes in the gutter, sports in the sewers, extracts gaiety from filth, grins and bites, whistles and sings, applauds and hisses, tempers the Hallelujah chorus with *Matanturlurette*, hums every known tune, finds without looking, knows what he is ignorant of, is a Spartan in filching, wallows on the dungheap, and emerges covered with stars. The gamin of Paris is the boy Rabelais.

He is not satisfied with his trousers if they have no watch-pockets.

He is surprised at little, and frightened by less, he sings down superstitions, reduces exaggerations, puts out his tongue at ghosts, depoetizes stilt, and introduces caricature into the most serious affairs. It is not that he is prosaic, far from it, but he substitutes a farcical phantasmagoria for solemn vision. If Adamastor were to appear to him, the gamin would say, " Hilloh, old Boguey ! "

CHAPTER XXI.

HE MAY BE USEFUL.

PARIS begins with the badaud and ends with the gamin, two beings of which no other city is capable ; the passive acceptance which is satisfied with looking, and the inexhaustible initiative, Prudhomme and Fouillon. Paris alone has that in its natural history : all the monarchy is in the badaud, all the anarchy is in the gamin. This pale child of the faubourgs of Paris lives, and is developed, and grows up in suffering, a thoughtful witness in the presence of social realities and human things. He believes himself reckless, but is not so : he looks on, ready to laugh, but also ready for something else. Whoever you may be who call yourself prejudice, abuses, ignominy, oppression, iniquity, despotism, injustice, fanaticism, or tyranny, take care of the yawning gamin.

This little fellow will grow. Of what clay is he made ? of anything : take a handful of mud, a breath, and you have Adam : it is sufficient for a God to pass, and God has ever passed over the gamin. Fortune toils for this little being, though by the word fortune we mean to some extent adventure. Will this pigmy, moulded in the coarse common clay, ignorant, uneducated, brutal, violent, and of the populace, be an Ionian or a Bæotian ? Wait a while, *dum currit rota*, and the genius of Paris, that demon which creates children of accident and men of destiny, will behave exactly contrary to the Latin potter, and make an amphora out of the earthenware jar.

The gamin loves the town, but he loves solitude as well, for there is something of the sage in him : he is *urbis amator* like Fuscus, and *ruris amator* like Flaccus. To wander about dreamily, that is, to lounge, is an excellent employment of time for the philosopher, particularly in that slightly bastard and somewhat ugly sort of country, which is, however, strange and composed of two natures, that surrounds certain large cities, and notably Paris. Observing the suburbs is looking at an amphibious scene ; it is the end of the trees and the beginning of the roofs, the end of the grass and the beginning of the pavement, the end of the furrows and the beginning of the shops, the end of rule and the beginning of passions, the end of the divine murmur and the beginning of human reason, and all this produces an extraordinary interest ; and such is the motive of the

apparently objectless walks of the dreamer in those unattractive parts, which the passer-by at once brands with the title of "sad."

The author of these lines was for a long time a prowler about the suburbs of Paris, and it is a source of profound recollection for him. The worn grass, the stony path, the chalk, the marl, the plaster, the rough monotony of ploughed and fallow land, the young plants in the kitchen garden suddenly noticed in a hollow, the mixture of the wild and the tame, the vast deserted nooks in which the garrison drummers hold their noisy school, these Thebaïds by day and cut-throat dens by night, the tottering mill turning in the wind, the wheels of the quarries, the wine-shops at the corners of the cemeteries, the mysterious charm of the tall dark walls cutting at right angles immense open fields bathed in sunshine and full of butterflies—all this attracted him.

Hardly any one knows those singular spots, la Glacière, la Cimetière, the hideous wall of Grenelle pock-marked with bullets, the Mont Parnasse, the Fosse aux Loups, the Tombe Isoire, or the Pierre Plate de Chatillon, where there is an old exhausted quarry, which is now only employed to grow mushrooms, and is closed by a heap of rotten boards flush with the ground. The Campagna of Rome is an idea, and the banlieue of Paris is another: to see in what an horizon offers us nought but fields, houses, or trees, is to remain on the surface; for all the aspects of things are the thoughts of God. The spot where a plain forms its junction with a town is always imprinted with a species of penetrating melancholy; for nature and humanity address you simultaneously, and local peculiarities make their appearance there.

Any one who has wandered like we have in those solitudes contiguous to our suburbs, which might be called the Limbos of Paris, has seen here and there, at the most deserted spot, and at the most unexpected moment, behind a scrubby hedge, or in the corner of some melancholy wall, children grouped tumultuously, fetid, muddy, dusty, unkempt, and ragged, playing together. They are the little runagates of poor families: this external boulevard is their breathing medium, and the banlieue belongs to them, and they eternally play truant in it. They ingenuously sing there their repertory of unclean songs. They are there, or, to speak more correctly, they dwell there, far from any eye, in the gentle warmth of May or June. Circling round a hole in the ground and playing at pitch and toss, like irresponsible, freed, and happy beings, so soon as they perceive you, they remember that they have a trade and must gain their livelihood, and they offer to sell you an old wool stocking full of may-

bugs or a spray of lilac. Such a meeting with chance children is one of the charming, and yet poignant, graces of the environs of Paris.

Sometimes there are girls among the heap of boys,—are they their sisters?—almost grown up, thin, feverish, sunburnt and freckled, crowned with wheat-ears and poppies; gay, haggard, and bare-footed. You may see them eating cherries among the wheat, and at night hear them laugh. These groups, warmly illumined by the bright light of mid-day, or seen in the twilight, for a long time occupy the dreamer, and these visions are mingled with his dreams.

Paris is the centre, the banlieue is the circumference—that is, the whole earth for these children. They never venture beyond it, and can no more leave the Parisian atmosphere than fish can live out of water. With them there is nothing beyond two leagues from the *barrière*; Ivry, Gentilly, Arcueil, Belleville, Aubervilliers, Menilmontant, Choisy le Roi, Bellancourt, Meudon, Issy, Vauvres, Sevres, Puteaux, Neuilly, Gennevilliers, Colombes, Romainville, Chalon, Asnières, Bougival, Nanterre, Enghien, Noisy-le-sec, Nogent, Gournay, Drancy, and Gonesse—at these places their universe ends.

CHAPTER XXII.

A SMALL BIT OF HISTORY.

At the almost contemporary period when this story happened there was not, as at the present day, a policeman at every street corner (a blessing which we have no time to discuss), and wandering children abounded in Paris. Statistics give us an average of two hundred and sixty shelterless children, picked up annually by the police of that day, in unenclosed fields, in houses building, and under the arches of bridges. One of these nests, which became famous, produced “the swallows of the Rue d’Arcole.” This, by the way, is the most disastrous of social symptoms, for all the crimes of the man begin with the vagabondage of the lad.

We must except Paris, however, and in a relative degree, and in spite of the statistics we have just quoted, the exception is fair. While in any other great city a vagabond child is a ruined man, while nearly everywhere the boy left to himself is, to some

extent, devoted and left to a species of fatal immersion in public vice, which destroys honour and conscience within him, the gamin of Paris, though externally so injured, is internally almost intact. It is a magnificent thing to be able to say, and one revealed in the splendid probity of our popular revolutions, that a certain incorruptibility emanates from the idea which is in the atmosphere of Paris, as from the salt which is in the ocean water. Breathing Paris preserves the soul.

But what we have just stated does not in any way decrease the heart-contraction which we feel every time we meet one of these lads, around whom we fancy that we can see the threads of the broken family fluttering. In our present civilization, which is still so incomplete, it is not a very abnormal fact, that families thus broken up should not know what becomes of their children, and allow their entrails to fall upon the public way. Hence come these obscure destinies, and this sad thing has become proverbial, and is known as "being cast on the pavement of Paris."

Let us remark parenthetically that such desertion of children was not discouraged by the old monarchy. A little of the Bohemian and Egyptian element in the lower classes suited the higher spheres, and the powerful ones profited by it. Hatred of national education was a dogma; of what good were half-lights? Such was the sentence, and the vagabond boy is the corollary of the ignorant boy. Besides, the monarchy sometimes wanted lads, and then it skimmed the streets. In the reign of Louis XIV., to go no further back, the King wished, rightly enough, to create a fleet. The idea was good, but let us look at the means. No fleet is possible, unless you have by the side of the sailing vessels, which are the plaything of the winds, vessels which can be sent wherever may be necessary, or be used as tugs, impelled by oars or steam; and in those days galleys were to the navy what steam-vessels now are. Hence galleys were needed, but galleys are only moved through the galley-slave, and hence the latter must be procured. Colbert ordered the Provincial Intendants and Parliaments to produce as many convicts as they could, and the magistrates displayed great complaisance in the matter. A man kept on his hat when a procession passed; that was a Huguenot attitude, and he was sent to the galleys. A boy was met in the street; provided that he was fifteen years of age, and had no place to sleep in, he was sent to the galleys. It was a great reign—a great age.

In the reign of Louis XV. children disappeared in Paris; the police carried them off and no one knew for what mysteri-

ous employment. Monstrous conjectures were whispered as to the King's purple baths. It sometimes happened that when boys ran short, the exempts seized such as had parents; and the parents, in their despair, attacked the exempts. In such a case Parliament interfered and hanged—whom? the exempts? no,—the fathers.

The Parisian gamin almost forms a caste, and we might say that a boy does not become so by wishing. The word *gamin* was printed for the first time, and passed from the populace into literature, in 1834. It made its first appearance in a work called Claude Gueux: the scandal was great, but the word has remained. The elements that constitute the consideration of gamins among one another are very varied. We knew and petted one, who was greatly respected and admired because he had seen a man fall off the towers of Notre Dame; another, because he had managed to enter the back-yard in which the statues of the dome of the Invalides were temporarily deposited, and steal lead off them; another, because he had seen a diligence upset; another, because he knew a soldier who had all but put out the eye of a civilian. This explains the exclamation of the Parisian gamin, at which the vulgar laughed without understanding its depth. "Dieu de Dieu! how unlucky I am! just think that I never saw anybody fall from a fifth floor!" Assuredly it was a neat remark of the peasant's: "Father So and So, your wife has died of her illness: why did you not send for a doctor?"—"What would you have, sir? we poor people die of ourselves." But if all the passiveness of the peasant is contained in this remark, all the free-thinking anarchy of the faubourien will be found in the following: a man condemned to death is listening to the confessor in the cart, and the child of Paris protests,—“He is talking to the skull-cap. Oh, the capon!”

A certain boldness in religious matters elevates the gamin, and it is important for him to be strong-minded. Being present at executions is a duty with him. He points at the guillotine and laughs at it, and calls it by all sorts of pet names,—end of the soup; the grumbler; the sky-blue mother; the last mouthful, &c. In order to lose none of the sight, he climbs up walls, escalades balconies, mounts trees, hangs to gratings, and clings to chimney-pots. A gamin is born to be a slater, as another is to be a sailor, and he is no more frightened at a roof than at a mast. No holiday is equal to the Grève, and Samson and the Abbé Montes are the real popular fêtes. The sufferer is hooted to encourage him, and is sometimes admired. Lacenaire, when a gamin, seeing the frightful Dautrem die

bravely, uttered a remark which contained his future fate,—“I was jealous of him.” In gamindom, Voltaire is unknown, but Papavoine is famous. Politicians and murderers are mingled in the same legend, and traditions exist as to the last garments of all. They know that Tolleron had a night-cap on; Avril a fur cap; Louvel a round hat; that old Delaporte was bald and bareheaded; Castaing rosy-cheeked and good-looking, and that Boriès had a romantic beard; Jean Martin kept his braces on, and Lecouffé and his mother abused each other: “Don’t quarrel about your basket,” a gamin shouted to them. Another little fellow climbed up a lamp-post on the quay, in order to watch Debacker pass; and a gendarme posted there frowned at him. “Let me climb up, M’sieu le Gendarme,” and to soften the man in authority, he added,—“I shall not fall.” “What do I care whether you fall or not?” the gendarme replied.

Among the gamins a memorable accident is highly esteemed, and a lad attains the summit of consideration if he give himself a deep cut “to the bone.” The fist is no small element of success, and one of the things which a gamin is very fond of saying is, “I am precious strong.” To be left-handed renders you enviable, while squinting is held in great esteem.

CHAPTER XXIII.

AN ANECDOTE OF THE LAST KING.

IN summer the gamin is metamorphosed into a frog, and leaps off the washing barges in front of the Jena and Austerlitz bridges into the Seine and all possible infractions of the laws of decency. Still the police are on the watch, and hence results a highly dramatic situation, which once gave rise to a paternal and memorable cry. This cry, which became celebrated about 1830, is a strategic warning from gamin to gamin; it can be scanned like a verse of Homer, with a notation almost as indescribable as the Eleusiac song of the Panathenæa, in which the ancient Evohé may be traced,—“Ohe, Titi, ohéée, here’s the sergeant, pack up your traps, and be off through the sewer!”

Sometimes this gad-fly—that is the name he gives himself—can read, sometimes he can write, and draw after a fashion. He does not hesitate to acquire, by some mysterious mutual in-

struction, all the talents which may be useful to the public cause. From 1815 to 1830 he imitated the cry of a turkey; from 1830 to 1848 he drew a pear upon the walls. One summer evening, Louis Philippe, returning home on foot, saw a very little scamp struggling to raise himself high enough to draw with charcoal a gigantic pear on the pillar of the Neuilly gates, and the King, with that kindness which he inherited from Henri IV., helped the gamin to finish the pear and gave him a louis, saying, "The pear is on that too." The gamin likes a commotion, and any violent condition pleases him. He execrates the curés. One day a young scamp was seen taking a sight at the gateway of No. 69, Rue de l'Université, "Why are you doing that to that gate?" a passer-by asked him; the lad answered, "A curé lives there." The Papal Nuncio in fact resided there. Still however great the gamin's Voltairianism may be, if the opportunity is offered him of being a chorister, he may possibly accept, and in that case serves in all politely. There are two things of which he is the Tantalus, and which he constantly desires without ever being able to attain them,—to overthrow the government and have his trousers reseated. The gamin, in a perfect state, is acquainted with all the police of Paris, and when he meets one, can always give a name to his face. He numbers them on his fingers, studies their names, and has his special notes about each. He reads the minds of the police like an open book, and will say curiously and without hesitating,— "So and so is a *traitor*, so and so is *very wicked*, so and so is *great*, so and so is *ridiculous*" (the italicized words have all a peculiar meaning in his mouth). This one believes that the Pont Neuf belongs to him, and prevents *the world* from walking on the cornice outside the parapet; another has a mania for pulling the ears of *persons*, &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE OLD SOUL OF GAUL.

THIS lad may be traced in Poquelin, a son of the Halles, and again in Beaumarchais, for gaminerie is a tinge of the Gallic temper. When blended with common sense, it at times adds strength, in the same way as alcohol when mixed with wine; at other times it is a fault. Homer, it is true, repeats himself,

and we might say that Voltaire plays the gamin. Camille Desmoulins was a faubourien. Championnet, who abused miracles, issued from the pavement of Paris; when quite a lad, he "inundated the porticos" of Saint Jean de Beauvais and Saint Etienne du Mont, and was on such familiar terms with the shrine of Saint Geneviève as eventually to give his orders to the vial of St Januarius.

The Parisian gamin is respectful, ironical, and insolent. He has bad teeth because he is badly fed and his stomach suffers, and fine eyes because he has talent. He would hop up the steps of Paradise in the very presence of Jehovah. He is clever at the savate, and all creeds are possible to him. He plays in the gutter, and draws himself up at the sound of an émeute; his effrontery cannot be subdued by grape-shot; he was a vagabond and becomes a hero, and, like the little Theban, he shakes the lion's skin. Barra the drummer was a Parisian gamin; he shouted, "Forward!" and in an instant became a giant. This child of the mud is also the child of the ideal; to see this we need only measure the distance between Molière and Barra.

In a word, the gamin is a being who amuses himself, because he is unhappy. The gamin of Paris at the present day, like the Græculus of Rome in former time, is the youthful people with the wrinkle of the old world on its forehead. The gamin is a grace for a nation, and at the same time a malady, a malady which must be cured. In what way? by light,—for light is sanitary and illuminating.

All the generous social irradiations issue from science, letters, the arts, and instruction. Make men and enlighten them in order that they may warm you. Sooner or later the splendid question of universal instruction will be asked with the irresistible authority of absolute truth; and then those who govern under the surveillance of French ideas will have to make a choice between children of France and gamins of Paris, between flames in light or will-o'-the-wisps in the darkness.

The gamin expresses Paris, and Paris expresses the world. For Paris is a total; it is the ceiling of the human race, and the whole of this prodigious city is an epitome of dead manners and living manners. The man who sees Paris imagines that he sees universal history, with sky and constellations in the intervals. Paris has a capital in the Town Hall, a Parthenon in Notre Dame, a Mons Aventinus in the Faubourg St Antoine, an Asinarium in the Sorbonne, a Pantheon in the Pantheon, a Via Sacra in the Boulevard des Italiens, a Tower of the Winds in public opinion, and ridicule has been substituted for the Gemoniæ. Its majo is called the "faraud," its Transteverine is

called the faubourien, its hammal the "fort de la Halie," its lazzarone the "pegre," and its cockney the "Gandin." All that is elsewhere is in Paris. Dumarsais' fish-fag can give a reply to the herb-seller of Euripides; Vejanus the discobolus lives again in the rope-dancer Forioso; Therapontiginus Miles could walk arm-in-arm with Grenadier Vadeboncœur; Damasippus the broker would be happy among the dealers in *bric-à-brac*; Vincennes would hold Socrates under lock, just as the Agora would pounce on Diderot; Grimod de la Regniere discovered roast-beef with tallow, in the same way as Curtillus invented roast hedge-hog. We have seen the trapeze of which we read in Plautus reappear under the balloon of the Arc de l'Etoile; the sword-swallower of Pœcile met by Apuleius, is a swallower of sabres on the Pont Neuf; Rameau's nephew and Curculion the parasite form a pair; Ergasites would have himself introduced to Cambaceres by d'Aigre feuille; the four fops of Rome, Alcesimarchus, Phœdromus, Dicabolus, and Argirypus descend the Courtille in Labatut's post-chaise; Aulus Gellius stopped before Congrio no longer than Charles Nodier did before Punchinello; Marton is not a tigress, but Pardaliska was not a dragon. Pantolabus humbugs Nomentamus, the gourmet, at the Café Anglais; Hermogenes is the Tenor in the Champs Elysées, and Thrasius the beggar, dressed as Bobèche, carries round the hat for him; the troublesome fellow who catches hold of your coat-button in the Tuileries makes you repeat after two thousand years the apostrophe of Thesperon,—*Quis properantem me prehendit pallio?* The wine of Suresne is a parody of the wine of Alba; Père Lachaise exhales in the night showers the same gleams as the Esquilæ; and the poor man's grave bought for five years is quite equal to the hired coffin of the slave.

Seek for anything which Paris has not. The tub of Trophonius contains nothing which is not in Mesmer's trough; Ergaphilas is resuscitated in Cagliostro; the Brahmin Vasaphanta is incarcerated in the Count de St Germain; and the cemetery of Sant Medard performs quite as good miracles as the Oumoumie Mosque at Damascus. Paris has an Esop in Mayeux, and a Canidia in Mademoiselle Lenormand; it is startled as Delphi was by the flaming realities of the vision; it makes tables turn as Dodona did tripods; it places a grisette upon a throne as Rome placed a courtesan; and, after all, if Louis Quinze is worse than Claudius, Madame Dubarry is better than Messalina. Paris combines in an extraordinary type what is dead and what we have elbowed,—Greek nudity, the Hebrew ulcer, and Gascon puns. It mixes up Diogenes,

Job, and Paillasse, dresses a ghost in old numbers of the *Constitutionnel*, and makes Chodrucnito a Duclos.

Although Plutarch says that "the tyrant never goes to sleep," Rome, under Sylla as under Domitian, was resigned, and liked to mix water with its wine. The Tiber was a Lethe, if we may believe the somewhat doctrinaire eulogium which Varus Viscus made of it: *Contra Gracchos Tiberim habemus. Bibere Tiberim, id est seditionem oblivisci*. Paris drinks a million quarts of water a day, but that does not prevent it from beating the tattoo and ringing the alarm bell when the opportunity offers.

With this exception, Paris is good-natured; it accepts everything royally; it is not difficult in the matter of its Venus; its Callipyge is a Hottentot; provided that it laughs, it forgives; ugliness amuses it, deformity does it good, and vice distracts it; if you are droll you may be a scoundrel; even hypocrisy, that supreme cynicism, does not revolt it; it is so literary that it does not hold its nose on passing Basile, and is no more scandalized by Tartufe's prayer than Horace was terrified by the "hic-cough" of Priapus. No feature of the human face is wanting in the profile of Paris; the Balle Mabille is not the Polyhymnian dance of the Janiculum, but the brothel-keeper has her eyes fixed on the Lorette there, exactly as the procuress Staphyla watched the Virgin Planesium. The Barriere des Combats is not a Colisæum, but people are as ferocious there as if Cæsar were looking on. The Syrian hostess has more grace than Mother Sagnet, but if Virgil frequented the Roman wine-shop, David of Angers, Balzac, and Chaillet have seated themselves in Parisian pot-houses. Paris reigns, geniuses flash in it, and red-tails prosper. Adonais passes through it in his twelve-wheeled car of thunder and lightning; and Silenus makes his entrance on his barrel. For Silenus read Ramponneau.

Paris is the synonym of Cosmos; Paris is Athens, Rome, Sybaris, Jerusalem, and Pantin. All civilizations are found there abridged, but so are all barbarisms. Paris would be very sorry not to have a guillotine, a little of the Place de Grève is useful, for what would this eternal festival be without that seasoning? The laws have wisely provided for that, and, thanks to them, the knife drains drops of blood upon this Mardi Gras.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE REIGN OF RIDICULE.

THERE are no limits to Paris, and no other city has held this sway which at times derides those whom it holds in subjection. "To please you, O Athenians!" Alexander exclaimed. Paris makes more than the law, for it sets the fashion; and it makes more than fashion, for it produces routine. Paris may be stupid, if it think proper; at times it indulges in that luxury, and then the universe is stupid with it; but Paris soon wakes up, rubs its eyes, says, How stupid I am, and laughs in the face of the human race. What a marvel such a city is! how strange it is to find this grandeur and this buffoonery side by side, to see how all this majesty is not deranged by this parody, and the same mouth to-day blowing the trumpet of the last judgment, and to-morrow a penny whistle! Paris has a sovereign gaiety, but the gaiety is lightning, and its farce holds a sceptre. Its hurricane at times issues from a furnace; its explosions, its days, its masterpieces, its prodigies, its epics, go to the end of the world, and so do its cock and bull tales. Its laugh is the crater of a volcano which bespatters the world; and its jokes are sparkles of fire. It imposes upon nations its caricatures as well as its ideal, and the loftiest monuments of human civilization accept its ironies and lend their eternity to its jokes. It is superb; it has a prodigious July 14, which delivers the globe; its night of August 4 dissolves in three hours a thousand years of feudalism; it multiplies itself in every form of sublimity; it fills with its lustre Washington, Kosciusko, Bolivar, Botzaris, Riego, Bem, Manin, Lopez, John Brown, and Garibaldi. It is found wherever the future bursts into a flash,—at Boston in 1779, at the Isle of Leon in 1820, at Pesth in 1848, at Palermo in 1860; it whispers the powerful watch-word "Liberty" in the ear of the American Abolitionists assembled at Harper's ferry, and in that of the patriots of Ancona assembled in the darkness before the Gozzi inn, on the sea-shore; it creates Canaris, it creates Quiroga; it creates Pisacane, it radiates grandeur upon the earth; it was by going whither its blast impelled him that Byron died at Missolonghi, and Mazet at Barcelona; it is a tribune under the feet of Mirabeau, and a crater under those of Robespierre; its books, plays, art, science, literature, and philosophy, are the manuals of the human race; it has Pascal,

Regnier, Corneille, Descartes, and Jean Jacques ; Voltaire, for any moment, Molière for all ages ; it makes the universal mouth speak its language ; it constructs in every mind the idea of progress ; the liberating dogmas which it fuses are well-trying friends for generations, and it is with mind of its thinkers and its poets that all the heroes of all nations have been formed since 1789. Still this does not prevent it from playing the gamin, and the enormous genius which is called Paris, while transfiguring the world with its light, draws Bouginier's nose with charcoal on the wall of the Temple of Theseus, and writes Credeville Voleur upon the Pyramids.

Paris constantly shows its teeth, and when it is not scolding it is laughing,—such is Paris. The smoke from its chimneys constitutes the ideas of the universe,—it is a pile of mud and stones if you like, but it is, before all, a moral being. It is more than grand, it is immense ; and why ? because it dares. Daring is the price paid for progress. All sublime contests are more or less the rewards of boldness. For the Revolution to take place, it was not enough that Montesquieu should foresee it, Diderot preach it, Beaumarchais announce it, Condorcet calculate it, Arouet prepare it, and Rousseau premeditate it,—it was necessary that Danton should dare it.

The cry of boldness is the *Fiat lux*. In order that the human race may progress, it must have proved lessons of courage permanently before it. Rashness dazzles history, and is one of the great brightnesses of man. The dawn dares when it breaks. To attempt, to brave, persist, and persevere, to be faithful to one's self, to wrestle with destiny, to astound the catastrophe by the slight fear which it causes us, at one moment to confront unjust power, at another to insult intoxicated victory, to hold firm and withstand—such is the example which people need and which electrifies them. The same formidable flash goes from the torch of Prometheus to the short clay pipe of Cambronne.

As for the Parisian people, even when full grown, it is always the gamin. Depicting the lad is depicting the city, and that is the reason why we have studied the eagle in the sparrow.

The Parisian race, we say again, is found most truly in the faubourg ; there it is pure-blooded, there we find the real physiognomy, there the people work and suffer, and toil and suffering are the two faces of the man. There are there immense numbers of strange beings, among whom may be found the wildest types, from the porter of la Rapie to the quarryman

of Montfauçon. *Fœx urbis*, Cicero exclaims; Mob, Burke adds, indignantly; a crowd, a multitude, a population, these words are quickly uttered; but no matter! what do I care that they go about barefoot? They cannot read; all the worse. Will you abandon them on that account? Will you convert their distress into a curse? Cannot light penetrate these masses? Let us revert to that cry of light, and insist upon it. Light, light! who knows whether this opaqueness may not become transparent? for are not revolutions themselves transfigurations? Come, philosophers, teach, enlighten, illumine, think aloud, speak loudly, run joyfully into the sunshine, fraternize with the public places, announce the glad tidings, spread alphabets around, proclaim the right, sing the Marseillaise, sow enthusiasm, and pluck green branches from the oaks. Make a whirlwind of the idea. This crowd may be sublimated, so let us learn how to make use of that vast conflagration of principles and virtues, which crackles and bursts into a flame at certain hours. These bare feet, these naked arms, these rags, this ignorance, this abjectness, this darkness, may be employed for the conquest of the ideal. Look through the people, and you will perceive the truth; the vile sand which you trample under foot, when cast into the furnace and melted, will become splendid crystal, and by its aid, Galileo and Newton discover planets.

CHAPTER XXVI.

LITTLE GAVROCHE.

EIGHT or nine years after the events recorded in the second portion of this story, there might be noticed on the Boulevard du Temple and in the regions of the Chateau d'Eau, a boy of about eleven or twelve years of age, who would have tolerably well realized the ideal of a gamin as sketched above, had he not had, with the smile of his age on his lips, a heart absolutely gloomy and void. This child was dressed in a man's trousers, but he had not got them from his father, and a woman's jacket, which did not come from his mother. Some persons had clothed him in rags out of charity. Yet he had a father and a mother, but his father did not think of him, and

his mother did not love him. He was one of those children worthy of pity before all, who have father and mother and are orphans.

This child was never so comfortable anywhere as in the street, for the paving-stones were less hard to him than his mother's heart. His parents had kicked him out into life, and he had simply tried his wings. He was a noisy, pale, active, sharp, impudent lad, with a cunning and sickly look. He came and went, sang, played at hopscotch, searched the gutters, pilfered a little, but gaily, like cats and sparrows, laughed when he was called a scamp, and felt angry when called a thief. He had no bed, no bread, no fire, no love: but he was happy because he was free. When these poor beings are men, the mill of social order nearly always crushes them, but so long as they are children they escape because they are small. The slightest hole saves them.

Still, so abandoned as this child was, it happened every two or three months that he said,—“Well, I'll go and see mamma.” Then he quitted the Boulevard, the Circus, the Porte St Martin, went along the quay, crossed the bridge, reached the Salpêtrière, and arrived where? Exactly at that double No. 50-52, which the reader knows, the Maison Gorbeau. At this period No. 50-52, which was habitually deserted and eternally decorated with a bill of “Lodgings to Let,” was, strange to say, inhabited by several persons, who had no acquaintance with each other, as is always the case in Paris. All belonged to that indigent class, which begins with the last small tradesman in difficulties, and is prolonged from wretchedness to wretchedness to those two beings to whom all the material things of civilization descend, the scavenger and the rag-picker.

The chief lodger of Jean Valjean's day was dead, and her place had been taken by another exactly like her. I forget now what philosopher said, “There is never any want of old women.” This new old woman was called Madame Burgon, and had nothing remarkable in her life save a dynasty of three parrots, which had successively reigned over her soul. The most wretched of all the persons inhabiting the house were a family of four persons, father, mother, and two nearly grown-up daughters, all four living in the same attic, one of the cells to which we have alluded.

This family offered at the first glance nothing very peculiar beyond its denudation; and the father, on hiring the room, stated that his name was Jondrette. A short time after he moved in, which had borne a striking resemblance—to employ the memorable remark of the chief lodger—to the coming in of nothing at all, this Jondrette had said to the woman, who,

like her predecessor, was also portress and swept the stairs, "Mother So and So, if any one were to ask by chance for a Pole, or an Italian, or perhaps a Spaniard, I am the party."

This was the family of the merry little vagabond. He joined it, and found distress, and, what is sadder still, not a smile; a cold hearth and cold heart. When he entered, they asked him, "Where do you come from?" and he answered, "From the street:" when he went away, "Where are you going?" and he answered, "To the street." His mother would say to him, "What do you want here?" The boy lived in this absence of affection like the pale grass which grows in cellars. He was not hurt by it being so, and was not angry with any one: he did not know exactly how a father and mother ought to be. Moreover, his mother loved his sisters.

We have forgotten to mention that on the boulevard the lad was called little Gavroche. Why was he called Gavroche? probably, because his father's name was Jondrette. Breaking the thread seems the instinct of some wretched families. The room which the Jondrettes occupied at the Maison Gorbau was the last in the passage, and the cell next to it was occupied by a very poor young man of the name of Monsieur Marius. Let us state who this Monsieur Marius was.

CHAPTER XXVII.

NINETY YEARS AND TWO-AND-THIRTY TEETH.

THERE are still a few persons residing in the Rue Boucherat, Rue de Normandie, and Rue de Saintonge, who can remember a gentleman of the name of M. Gillenormand, and speak kindly about him. This man was old when they were young, and this profile has not entirely disappeared, with those who look sadly at the vague congregation of shadows called the past, from the labyrinth of streets near the Temple, which in the reign of Louis XIV. received the names of all the provinces of France, exactly in the same way as in our time the names of all the capitals of Europe have been given to the streets in the new Tivoli quarter; a progression, by the by, in which progress is visible.

M. Gillenormand, who was most lively in 1831, was one of those men who have become curious to look on, solely because

they have lived a long time, and are strange, because they once resembled everybody and now no longer resemble any one. He was a peculiar old man, and most certainly the man of another age, the complete and rather haughty bourgeois of the eighteenth century, who carried his honest old bourgeoisie with the same air as Marquises did their marquisate. He had passed his ninetieth year, walked upright, talked loudly, saw clearly, drank heartily, and ate, slept, and snored. He still had his two-and-thirty teeth, and only wore spectacles to read with. He was of an amorous temper, but said that for the last ten years he had decidedly and entirely given up the sex. "He could not please," he said: and he did not add "I am too old," but "I am too poor. If I were not ruined—he, he, he!" In fact, all that was left him was an income of about fifteen thousand francs. His dream was to make a large inheritance, and have one hundred thousand francs a year, in order to keep mistresses. As we see, he did not belong to that weak variety of octogenarians, who, like M. de Voltaire, were dying all their life; his longevity was not that of the cracked jug, and this jolly old gentleman had constantly enjoyed good health. He was superficial, rapidly and easily angered, and he would storm at the slightest thing, most usually an absurd trifle. When he was contradicted, he raised his cane, and thrashed his people, as folk used to do in the great age. He had a daughter, upwards of fifty years of age and unmarried, whom he gave a hearty thrashing to when he was in a passion, and whom he would have liked to whip, for he fancied her eight years of age. He boxed his servant's ears energetically, and would say, "Ah, carrion!" One of his oaths was, "By the *pantouflocuche* of the *pantouflocade*!" His tranquillity was curious; he was shaved every morning by a barber who had been mad and who detested him, for he was jealous of M. Gillenormand on account of his wife, who was a pretty little coquette. M. Gillenormand admired his own discernment in everything, and declared himself extremely sagacious. Here is one of his remarks,—“I have, in truth, some penetration. I am able to say, when a flea bites me, from what woman I caught it.” The words he employed most frequently were “the sensitive man” and “nature,” but he did not give to the latter word the vast acceptation of our age. But there was a certain amount of homeliness in his satirical remarks. “Nature,” he would say, “anxious that civilization may have a little of everything, even gives it specimens of amusing barbarism. Europe has specimens of Asia and Africa, in a reduced size; the cat is a drawing-room tiger, the lizard a pocket crocodile. The ballet girls at the opera are pink savagesses;

they do not eat men, but they live on them : the little magicians change them into oysters and swallow them. The Caribs only leave the bones, and they only leave the shells. Such are our manners ; we do not devour, but we nibble ; we do not exterminate, but we scratch."

He lived in the Marais, at No. 6, Rue des Filles des Calvaire, and the house belonged to him. This house has since been pulled down and rebuilt, and the number has probably been changed in the numbering revolutions which the streets of Paris undergo. He occupied an old and vast suite of rooms on the first floor, furnished up to the ceiling with large Gobelins and Beauvais tapestry, representing shepherd scenes ; the subjects of the ceiling and panels were repeated in miniature upon the chairs. He surrounded his bed with an immense screen of Coromandel lacquer work ; long curtains hung from the windows, and made very splendid, large, broken folds. The garden immediately under the windows was reached by a flight of twelve or fifteen steps running from one of them, which the old gentleman went up and down very nimbly. In addition to a library adjoining his bed-room, he had a boudoir, which he was very fond of, a gallant withdrawing-room, hung with a magnificent fleur-de-lysed tapestry, made in the galleys of Louis XIV., which M. de Vivonne had ordered of his convicts for his mistress. M. Gillenormand inherited this from a stern maternal great-aunt, who died at the age of one hundred. He had had two wives. His manners were mid-way between those of the courtier, which he had never been, and of the barrister, which he might have been. He was gay and pleasing when he liked ; in his youth he had been one of those men who are always deceived by their wives and never by their mistresses, because they are at once the most disagreeable husbands and the most charming lovers imaginable. He was a connoisseur of pictures, and had in his bed-room a marvellous portrait of somebody unknown, painted by Jordaens in a bold style, and with an infinitude of details. M. Gillenormand's coat was not in the style of Louis XV. or even Louis XVI., but it was in the style of the Incrédibles of the Directory. He had believed himself quite a youth at that time, and followed the fashions. His coat was of light cloth with large cuffs, he wore a long cod-pigtail, and large steel buttons. Add to these, knee-breeches and buckle-shoes. He always had his hands in his fobs, and said authoritatively, "The French Revolution is a collection of ragamuffins."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CENTENARIAN ASPIRATIONS.

AT the age of sixteen, when at the opera one night, he had the honour of being examined simultaneously by two beauties, at that time, celebrated and sung by Voltaire, la Camargo, and la Salle. Caught between two fires, he beat an heroic retreat upon a little dancing-girl of the name of Naheury, sixteen years of age, like himself, obscure as a cat, of whom he was enamoured. He abounded in recollections, and would exclaim, "How pretty that Guimard-Guimardini-Guimardinette was, the last time I saw her at Longchamps, with her hair dressed in 'sustained feelings,' her 'come and see them' of turquoises, her dress of the colour of 'newly-arrived people,' and her muff of 'agitation.'" He had worn in his youth a jacket of Nain-Londeur, to which he was fond of alluding: "I was dressed like a Turk of the Levantine Levant." Madame Boufflers, seeing him accidentally when he was twenty years of age, declared him to be "a charming madcap." He was scandalized at all the names he saw in politics and power, and considered them low and bourgeois. He read the journals, the *newspapers*, the *gazettes*, as he called them, and burst into a laugh. "Oh!" he would say, "who are these people? Corbière! Humann! Casimir Perrier! there's a ministry for you! I can imagine this in a paper, M. Gillenormand, Minister; it would be a farce, but they are so stupid that it might easily happen." He lightly called everything by its proper or improper name, and was not checked by the presence of ladies; and he uttered coarseness, obscenity, and filth, with a peculiarly calm and slightly amazed accent, in which was elegance. That was the indifference of his age, for we may draw attention to the fact that the season of paraphrases in verse was that of crudities in prose. His grandfather had predicted that he would be a man of genius, and gave him the two significant Christian names, Luc Esprit.

He gained prizes in his youth at the college of Moulins, in which town he was born, and was crowned by the hand of the Duc de Nivernais, whom he called the Duc de Nevers. Neither the Convention, the death of Louis XVI., Napoleon, nor the return of the Bourbons, had effaced the recollection

of this coronation. The Duc de Nevers was to him the grand figure of the age. "What a charming nobleman," he would say, "and how well his blue ribbon became him! In the eyes of M. Gillenormand, Catherine II. repaired the crime of the division of Poland, by purchasing of Bestucheff, for three thousand roubles, the secret of the elixir of gold, and on this point he would grow animated. "The elixir of gold!" he would exclaim. "Bestucheff's yellow tincture and the drops of General Lamotte were, in the 18th century, at one louis the half-ounce bottle, the grand remedy for love catastrophes, the panacæa against Venus. Louis XV. sent two hundred bottles of it to the Pope." He would have been greatly exasperated had he been told that the gold elixir is nothing but perchloride of iron. M. Gillenormand adored the Bourbons, and held 1789 in horror; he incessantly described in what way he had escaped during the reign of terror, and how he had been obliged to display great gaiety and wit in order not to have his head cut off. If any young man dared in his presence to praise the Republic, he turned blue, and grew so angry as almost to faint. Sometimes he alluded to his ninety years, and said, "I trust that I shall not see '93 twice." At other times, though, he informed persons that he intended to live to be a hundred.

CHAPTER XXIX.

BASQUE AND NICOLETTE.

HE had his theories; here is one of them. "When a man passionately loves women, and himself has a wife for whom he cares little, for she is ugly, legitimate, full of her rights, reliant on the code, and jealous when she likes to be so, he has only one way of getting out of the hobble and living at peace,—it is to leave his purse-strings to his wife. This abdication renders him free; the wife is henceforth occupied, grows passionately fond of handling specie, verdigrises her fingers, undertakes to instruct the peasants and train the farmers, harangues the notaries, visits their offices, follows the course of law-suits, draws up leases, dictates contracts, feels herself queenly, sells, buys, regulates, orders, promises and compromises, yields, concedes and recedes, arranges, deranges, saves and squanders; she commits follies,

which is a magisterial and personal happiness, and that consoles her. While her husband despises her she has the satisfaction of ruining her husband." This theory M. Gillenormand applied to himself, and it became his history. His wife, the second one, managed his fortune in such a manner that one fine day when he found himself a widower, he had just enough to live on, by buying an annuity, three-fourths of which would expire with him. He had not hesitated, for he did not care much about leaving anything to his heir, and, besides, he had seen that patrimonies had their adventures, and, for instance, became "National Property;" he had seen the avatars of the three per cent. consols, and put but little faith in the great Book. "All that is Rue Quincampoix!" he would say. His house in the Rue des Filles du Calvaire belonged, as we stated, to him, and he had two servants, "a he and a she." When a servant came into his house M. Gillenormand rechristened him, and gave the men the name of their province, Nîmois, Comtois, Poitevin, or Picard. His last valet was a fat cunning man of fifty-five, incapable of running twenty yards, but as he was born at Bayonne M. Gillenormand called him Basque. As for the maid-servants, he called them all Nicolette (even la Magnon, to whom we shall allude directly). One day a proud cook, a Cordon Bleu, of the lofty porter race, presented herself. "What wages do you expect a month?" M. Gillenormand asked her. "Thirty francs." "What is your name?" "Olympie." "I will give you forty, and call you Nicolette."

In Gillenormand sorrow was translated into passion; he was furious at being in despair. He had every prejudice and took every license. One of the things of which he composed his external relief and internal satisfaction was, as we have indicated, having remained a gay fellow, and passing energetically for such. He called this having a "royal renown," but this renown at times brought him into singular scrapes. One day a big baby, wrapped in rags and crying lustily, was brought to him in a basket, which a maid-servant, discharged six months previously, attributed to him. M. Gillenormand was at that time past his eighty-fourth year, and people around him became indignant and clamorous. "Does the impudent wench expect to make anybody believe this? What audacity! what an abominable calumny!" M. Gillenormand, however, did not feel at all angry. He looked at the brat with the amiable smile of a man flattered by the calumny, and said to the company, "Well, what is the matter? Is there anything so wonderful in it, that you should stand there like stuck pigs, and display your ignorance? M. le Duc d'Angoulême, bastard of

his Majesty Charles IX., married at the age of eighty-five a girl of fifteen; Monsieur Virginal, Marquis d'Alleuze, and brother of Cardinal de Sourdis, Archbishop of Bordeaux, had at the age of eighty-three by the lady's maid of Madame Jacquin, the President's wife, a lovely boy, who was a Knight of Malta, and Member of the Privy Council. One of the great men of this age, Abbé Tabaraud, is the son of a man of eighty-seven years of age. These things are common enough; and then take the Bible! After this, I declare that this little gentleman is none of mine, but take care of him, for it is not his fault." The creature, the aforesaid Magnon, sent him a second parcel the next year, also a boy, and M. Gillenormand thought it time to capitulate. He sent the two brats to their mother, agreeing to pay eighty francs a month for their support, but on condition that the mother was not to begin again. He added, "I expect that the mother will treat them well, and I shall go and see them now and then," which he did. He had a brother, a priest, who was for three-and-thirty years Rector of the Poitiers academy, and died at the age of seventy-nine. "I lost him when quite young," he would say. This brother, who is not much remembered, was a great miser, who, as he was a priest, thought himself bound to give alms to the poor he met, but he never gave them aught but bad or called-in money, thus finding means of going to Hades by the road to Paradise. As for M. Gillenormand the elder, he gave alms readily and handsomely, he was benevolent, brusque, and charitable, and had he been rich his downfall would have been magnificent. He liked everything that concerned him to be done grandly; even when he was swindled one day, having been plundered in the matter of an inheritance by a man of business in a clumsy and evident way, he made the solemn remark, "Sir, that was done very awkwardly, and I feel ashamed of such clumsiness. Everything has degenerated in this age, even the swindlers. Morbleu! a man of my stamp ought not to be robbed in that way; I was plundered as if I were in a wood, but badly plundered, *sylvæ sint consule dignæ!*" He had married twice, as we said; by his first wife he had a girl, who did marry, and by the second another girl, who died at the age of thirty, and who married through love, or chance, or otherwise, a soldier of fortune who had served in the armies of the Republic and the Empire, won the cross at Austerlitz, and his colonel's commission at Waterloo. "He is the disgrace of my family," the old gentleman used to say. He took a great deal of snuff, and had a peculiarly graceful way of shaking his shirt-frill with the back of his hand. He believed very little in God.

CHAPTER XXX.

TWO WHO DO NOT FORM A PAIR.

SUCH was M. Luc Esprit Gillenormand, who had not lost his hair, which was rather grey than white, and always wore it in dog's ears. Altogether he was venerable, and contained both the frivolity and grandeur of the eighteenth century. In 1814 and the early years of the Restoration, M. Gillenormand, who was still a youth—he was only seventy-four—resided in the Rue Sirvandoni, Faubourg St Germain. He only retired to the Marais on leaving society, that is to say, long after his eightieth year, and on leaving the world he immured himself in his habits; the chief one, and in that he was invariable, was to keep his door closed by day and receive nobody, no matter the nature of his business, till night. He dined at five, and then his door was thrown open; it was the fashion of his century, and he did not like to give it up. "Day is low," he would say, "and only deserves closed shutters." People of fashion light up their wit when the zenith illumines its stars, and he barricaded himself against everybody, even had it been the King,—such was the fashion of his day.

As for M. Gillenormand's two daughters, they were born at an interval of ten years. In their youth they had been very little alike, and both in character and face were as little sisters as was possible. The younger was a charming creature, who turned to the light, loved flowers, poetry, and music, was enthusiastic, ethereal, and mentally betrothed from her youth up to some heroic figure. The elder had her chimera too; she saw in the azure a contractor, some fat and very rich man, a splendidly stupid husband, a million converted into a man, or else a prefect, the reception at the prefecture, an usher in the ante-room with a chain round his neck, the official balls, the addresses at the mansion-house to be "Madame la Prefète,"—all this buzzed in her imagination. The two sisters wandered each in her own reverie, at the period when they were girls, and both had wings, the one those of an angel, the other those of a goose.

No ambition is fully realized, at least not in this nether world, and no paradise becomes earthly in our age. The younger married the man of her dreams, but she was dead, while the elder did not marry. At the period when she

enters into our narrative, she was an old virtue, an incombustible pride, with one of the most acute noses and most obtuse intellects imaginable. It is a characteristic fact that, beyond her family, no one had ever known her family name; she was called Mademoiselle Gillenormand the elder. In the matter of cant, Mademoiselle Gillenormand could have given points to a Miss, and she was modestly carried to the verge of blackness. She had one frightful reminiscence in her life—one day a man saw her garter.

Age had only heightened this pitiless modesty,—her chemisette was never sufficiently opaque, and never was high enough. She multiplied brooches and pins at places where no one dreamed of looking. The peculiarity of prudery is to station the more sentries the less the fortress is menaced. Still, let who will explain these old mysteries of innocence, she allowed herself to be kissed without displeasure by an officer in the Lancers, who was her grand nephew, and Théodule by name. In spite of this favoured Lancer, however, the ticket of "Prude" which we have set upon her, suited her exactly. Mademoiselle Gillenormand's was a species of twilight soul, and prudery is a semi-virtue, and a semi-vice. She added to prudery the congenial lining of bigotry; she belonged to the Sisterhood of the Virgin, wore a white veil on certain saints' days, muttered special orisons, revered "the holy blood," venerated "the sacred heart," remained for hours in contemplation before a rococo-Jesuit altar in a closed chapel, and allowed her soul to soar among the little marble clouds and through the large beams of gilt wood.

She had a chapel friend, an old maid like herself, of the name of Mlle Vaubois, absolutely imbecile, and by whose side Mlle Gillenormand had the pleasure of being an eagle. Beyond Agnus Deis and Ave Marias, Mlle Vaubois knew nothing except the different ways of making preserves. Perfect of her genius, she was the ermine of stupidity, without a single spot of intelligence. We must add that Mlle Gillenormand rather gained than lost by growing old. She had never been wicked, which is a relative goodness; and then years abrade angles. She had an obscure melancholy, of which she did not, herself, possess the secret, and about her entire person there was the stupor of a finished life which has not begun. She kept house for her father; such families, consisting of an old man and an old maid, are not rare, and have the ever-touching appearance of two weaknesses supporting each other.

There was also in this house a child, a little boy, who was

always trembling and dumb in the old gentleman's presence. M. Gillenormand never spoke to this boy except with a stern voice, and at times with up-raised cane. "Come here, sir,—scamp, scoundrel, come here,—answer me, fellow,—let me see you, vagabond!" &c. &c. He adored him; it was his grandson, and we shall meet him again.

CHAPTER XXXI.

AN OLD DRAWING-ROOM.

WHEN M. Gillenormand lived in the Rue Sirvandoni, he frequented several very good and highly noble salons. Although a bourgeois, M. Gillenormand was welcome in them, and as he had a two-fold stock of wit, namely, that which he had, and that attributed to him, he was sought after and made much of. There are some people who desire influence and to be talked about, no matter what price they pay; and when they cannot be oracles, they make themselves buffoons. M. Gillenormand was not of that nature; and his domination in the Royalist drawing-rooms which he frequented did not cost him any of his self-respect. He was an oracle everywhere, and at times he held his own against M. de Bonald, and even M. Bengy-Puy-Vallée.

About 1817, he invariably spent two afternoons a week at the house of the Baronne de T——, a worthy and respectable person, whose husband had been, under Louis XVI., Ambassador to Berlin. The Baron de T——, who, when alive, was passionately devoted to magnetic ecstasies and visions, died abroad a ruined man, leaving as his sole fortune ten MS. volumes bound in red Morocco and gilt-edged, which contained very curious memoirs about Mesmer and his trough. Madame de T—— did not publish these memoirs through dignity, and lived on a small annuity, which survived no one knew how. Madame de T—— lived away from Court, "which was a very mixed society," as she said, in noble, proud, and poor isolation. Some friends collected twice a week round her widow's fire, and this constituted a pure Royalist salon. Tea was drunk, and people uttered there, according as the wind blew to elegiacs or dithyrambics, groans or cries of horror, about the age, the charter, the Bonapartists, the prostitution of the Cordon Bleu

to untitled persons, and the Jacobinism of Louis XVIII. ; and they also whispered about the hopes which Monsieur, afterwards Charles X., produced.

Low songs, in which Napoleon was called Nicholas, were greeted here with transports of delight. Duchesses, the most charming and delicate of ladies, went into ecstasies there about couplets like the following, which were addressed to the "Federals :

"Renforcez dans vos culottes
Le bout d'chemise qui vous pend.
Qu'on n'dis pas qu'les patriotes
Ont arboré l'drapeau blanc !"

They amused themselves with puns which they fancied tremendous, with innocent jokes which they supposed venomous, with quatrains and even distichs ; here is one on the Dessolles Ministry, the moderate cabinet of which Mons. Decases and Deserre formed part :

"Pour raffermir le trone ébranlé sur sa base,
Il faut changer de sol, et de serre et de case ;"

or else they played upon the list of the House of Peers, "An abominably Jacobin chamber," and combined names on this list so as to form, for instance, phrases like the following : "Damas, Sabran, Gouvion de St Cyr." In this society the Revolution was parodied, and they had some desire to sharpen the same passions in the contrary sense, and sang their *ça ira*.

"Ah ! ça ira ! ça ira ! ça ira !
Les Buonapartist' à la lanterne !"

Songs are like the guillotine, they cut off indiscriminately to-day this head, and to-morrow that. It is only a variation. In the Fualdès' affair, which belongs to this period, 1816, they sided with Bastide and Jansion, because Fualdès was a "Buonapartist." They called the Liberals friends and brothers, and that was the last degree of insult. Like some church-steeple, the salon of the Baronne de T—— had two cocks ; one was M. Gillenormand, the other the Comte de Lamothe Valois, of whom they whispered with a species of respect,—"You know ? the Lamothe of the necklace business,"—parties have these singular amnesties.

Let us add this ; in the bourgeoisie, honoured situations are lessened by too facile relations, and care must be taken as to who is admitted. In the same as there is a loss of caloric in

the vicinity of cold persons, there is a diminution of respect on the approach of despised persons. The old high society held itself above this law, as above all others; Marigny, brother of the Pompadour, visited the Prince de Soubise, not although, but because he was her brother. Du Barry, godfather of the Vaubernier, is most welcome at the house of the Maréchal de Richelieu. That world is Olympus, and Mercury and the Prince de Guemenée are at home in it. A robber is admitted to it, provided he be a god.

The Comte de Lamothe, who, in 1815, was seventy-five years of age, had nothing remarkable about him beyond his silent and sententious air, his angular and cold face, his perfectly polite manners, his coat buttoned up to the chin, and his constantly crossed legs, covered with trousers of the colour of burnt Sienna. His face was the same colour as his trousers. This M. de Lamothe was esteemed in this salon on account of his "celebrity," and, strange to say, but true, on account of his name of Valois.

As for M. Gillenormand, the respect felt for him was of perfectly good alloy. He was an authority; in spite of his levity, he had a certain imposing, worthy, honest, and haughty manner, which did not at all injure his gaiety, and his great age added to it. A man is not a century with impunity, and years eventually form a venerable fence around a head. He made remarks, too, which had all the sparkle of the old régime. Thus, when the King of Prussia, after restoring Louis XVIII., paid him a visit under the name of the Comte de Ruppin, he was received by the descendant of Louis XIV. somewhat as if he were Marquis de Brandebourg, and with the most delicate impertinence. M. Gillenormand approved of it. "All kings who are not King of France," he said, "are provincial kings." One day the following question was asked, and answer given in his presence,—"What has been done about the Editor of the *Courrier Français*?" "He is to be changed." "There's a c too much," M. Gillenormand drily observed. At an anniversary Te Deum for the return of the Bourbons, on seeing M. de Talleyrand pass, he said,—"There's his Excellency the Devil."

M. Gillenormand was generally accompanied by his daughter, a tall young lady, who at that time was forty and looked fifty; and by a pretty boy of nine years of age, red and white, fresh, with happy, confident eyes, who never appeared in this drawing-room without hearing all the voices buzz around him,—"How pretty he is! what a pity, poor boy!" This lad was the one to whom we referred just now, and he was called 'poor

boy' because he had for father "a brigand of the Loire." This brigand was that son-in-law of M. Gillenormand, who has already been mentioned, and whom the old gentleman called the "disgrace of his family."

CHAPTER XXXII.

A RED SPECTRE OF THAT DAY.

ANY one who had passed at that period through the little town of Vernon, and walked on the handsome stone bridge, which, let us hope, will soon be succeeded by some hideous wire bridge, would have noticed, on looking over the parapet, a man of about fifty, wearing a leathern cap, and trousers and jacket of coarse grey cloth, to which something yellow, which had been a red ribbon, was sewn, with a face tanned by the sun, and almost black, and hair almost white, with a large scar on his forehead and running down his cheek, bowed and prematurely aged, walking almost every day, spade and pick in hand, in one of the walled enclosures near the bridge, which border, like a belt of terraces, the left bank of the Seine. There are delicious enclosures full of flowers, of which you might say, were they much larger, "they are gardens," and if they were a little smaller, "they are bouquets." All these enclosures join the river at one end and a house at the other. The man in the jacket and wooden shoes, to whom we have alluded, occupied in 1817 the narrowest of these enclosures and the smallest of these houses. He lived there alone and solitary, silently and poorly, with a woman who was neither young nor old, neither pretty nor ugly, neither peasant nor bourgeoisie, who waited on him. The square of land which he called his garden was celebrated in the town for the beauty of the flowers he cultivated, and they were his occupation.

Through his toil, perseverance, attention, and watering-pot, he had succeeded in creating after the Creator; and he had invented sundry tulips and dahlias which seemed to have been forgotten by nature. He was ingenious, and preceded Soulange Bodin in the formation of small patches of peat-soil for the growth of the rare and precious shrubs of America and China. . From daybreak in summer he was in his walks, pricking out, clipping, hoeing, watering, or moving among his flowers,

with an air of kindness, sorrow, and gentleness. At times he would stand thoughtful and motionless for hours, listening to the song of a bird in a tree, the prattle of a child in a house, or else gazing at a drop of dew on a blade of grass, which the sun converted into a carbuncle. He lived very poorly, and drank more milk than wine: a child made him give way, and his servant scolded him. He was timid to such an extent that he seemed stern, went out rarely, and saw no one but the poor, who tapped at his window, and his curé, Abbé Mabœuf, a good old man. Still, if the inhabitants of the town or strangers, curious to see his roses or tulips, came and tapped at his little door, he opened it with a smile. He was the brigand of the Loire.

Any one who, at the same time, read military Memoirs and Biographies, the *Moniteur* and the bulletins of the great army, might have been struck by a name which pretty often turns up, that of George Pontmercy. When quite a lad this Pontmercy was a private in the Saintonge regiment, and when the Revolution broke out, this regiment formed part of the army of the Rhine, for the regiments of the Monarchy kept their provincial names even after the fall of the Monarchy, and were not brigaded till 1794. Pontmercy fought at Spire, Worms, Neustadt, Turkheim, Alzey, and at Mayence, where he was one of the two hundred who formed Houchard's rear-guard. He, with eleven others, held out against the corps of the Prince of Hesse behind the old rampart of Andernach, and did not fall back on the main body until the enemy's guns had opened a breach from the parapet to the talus. He was under Kleber at Marchiennes, and at the fight of Mont Palissel, where his arm was broken by a rifle-ball; then he went to the frontier of Italy, and was one of the thirty who defended the Col de Tenda with Joubert. Joubert was appointed adjutant-general, and Pontmercy sub-lieutenant; he was by Berthier's side in the middle of the canister on that day of Lodi which made Bonaparte say, "Berthier was gunner, trooper, and grenadier." He saw his old general Joubert fall at Novi at the moment when he was shouting, with uplifted sabre, "Forward!" Having embarked with his company on board a cutter, which sailed from Genoa to some little port of the coast, he fell into a wasps' nest of seven or eight English sail. The Genoese commandant wished to throw his guns into the sea, hide the soldiers in the hold, and pass like a merchant vessel, but Pontmercy had the tricolour flag hoisted at the peak, and proudly passed under the guns of the British frigates. Twenty leagues further on, his audacity increasing, he attacked and captured a large English

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transport conveying troops to Sicily, and so laden with men and horses that the vessel's deck was almost flush with the sea. In 1805 he belonged to Malher's division, which took Gunzbourg from the Archduke Ferdinand, and at Wettingen he caught in his arms, amid a shower of bullets, Colonel Maupilet, who was mortally wounded at the head of the 9th Dragoons. He distinguished himself at Austerlitz in that admirable march in columns of companies performed under the enemy's fire; and when the Russian Imperial Horse Guards destroyed one of the battalions of the 4th line Infantry, Pontmercy was among those who took their revenge, and drew back these Guards. For this the Emperor gave him the Cross. Pontmercy saw in turn Wurmser made prisoner at Mantua, Mèlas at Alessandria, and Mack at Ulm, and he belonged to the eighth corps of the grand army which Mortier commanded, and which took Hamburg. Then he joined the 55th regiment of the line, which was the old regiment of Flanders; at Eylau, he was in the cemetery where the heroic Captain Louis Hugo, uncle of the author of this book, withstood, with his company of eighty-three men, for two hours, the whole effort of the enemy's army. Pontmercy was one of the three who left this cemetery alive. He was at Friedland; then he saw Moscow, the Beresina, Lutzen, Bautzen, Dresden, Wacha, Leipsic, and the defiles of Gelnhausen; then at Montmercil, Chateau-Thierry, Craon, the banks of the Marne, the banks of the Aisne, and the formidable position of Laon. At Arnay le Duc, as captain, he sabred ten Cossacks, and saved not his general, but his corporal; he was cut to pieces on this occasion, and seven-and-twenty splinters were taken out of his left arm alone. Eight days before the capitulation of Paris he exchanged with a comrade and entered the cavalry; for he had what was called under the old régime a "double hand," that is to say, an equal aptitude in handling, as private, a sabre or musket, as officer, a squadron or a company. From this aptitude, improved by military education, special arms sprang, for instance, the dragoons, who are at once cavalry and infantry. He accompanied Napoleon to Elba, and at Waterloo was a Major of cuirassiers in Dubois' brigade. It was he who took the colours of the Limburg battalion, and himself threw them at the Emperor's feet. He was covered with blood, for, on seizing the colours, he received a sabre cut across the face. The Emperor, who was pleased, cried out to him, "You are a Colonel, a Baron, and officer of the Legion of Honour!" Pontmercy answered,—“Sire, I thank you on behalf of my widow.” An hour later he fell into the ravine of

Ohain. And now who was this George Pontmercy? He was the same brigand of the Loire.

We have already seen some portion of his history. After Waterloo, Pontmercy, drawn as we remember out of the hollow way of Ohain, succeeded in rejoining the army, and dragged himself from ambulance to ambulance as far as the cantonments of the Loire. The Restoration put him on half pay, and then sent him to Vernon, under honourable surveillance. King Louis XVIII., regarding all that was done in the Hundred Days as if it had not happened, recognized neither his quality as officer of the Legion of Honour, nor his commission as Colonel, nor his title as Baron. He for his part neglected no opportunity to sign himself, "Colonel Baron de Pontmercy." He had only one old blue coat, and never went out without attaching to it the rosette of the Legion of Honour. The King's attorney advised him that he would be tried for illegally wearing this decoration, and when this hint was given him by an officious intermediary, Pontmercy replied, with a bitter smile, "I do not know whether it is that I no longer understand French, or whether you are not speaking it, but the fact remains the same. I do not understand you." Then he went out for eight days in succession with his rosette, and the authorities did not venture to interfere with him. Twice or thrice the Minister of War or the General commanding the department wrote to him with the following superscription; "M. le Commandant Pontmercy," and he sent back the letters unopened. At the same moment Napoleon at St Helena was treating in the same fashion the missives of Sir Hudson Lowe, addressed to "General Bonaparte." If we may be forgiven the remark, Pontmercy finished by having the same saliva in his mouth as the Emperor. There were also at Rome, Carthaginian prisoners who refused to salute Flaminius, and had a little of Hannibal's soul in them.

One morning he met the King's attorney in a street of Vernon, went up to him, and said, "Monsieur le Procureur du Roi, am I allowed to wear my scar?"

He had nothing but his scanty half-pay as Major, and he had taken the smallest house in Vernon, where he lived alone, in what way we have just seen. Under the Empire and between two wars he found time to marry Mademoiselle Gillenormand. The old bourgeois, who was indignant in his heart, concluded with a sigh and saying, "The greatest families are forced into it." In 1815, Madame Pontmercy, a most admirable woman in every respect, and worthy of her husband, died, leaving a child.

This child would have been the Colonel's delight in his solitude, but the grandfather imperiously claimed him, declaring that if he were not given up to him he would disinherit him. The father yielded for the sake of the little one, and, unable to love his son, he took to loving flowers.

He had, however, given up everything, and did not join the opposition or conspire. He shared his thoughts between the innocent things he did and the great things he had done, and he spent his time in hoping for a carnation or calling to mind Austerlitz. M. Gillenormand kept up no relations with his son-in-law; the Colonel was to him a "bandit," and he was for the Colonel an "ass." M. Gillenormand never spoke about the Colonel, except at times to make mocking allusions to "his barony." It was expressly stipulated that Pontmercy should never attempt to see his son or speak to him, under penalty of having him thrown on his hands disinherited. To the Gillenormands, Pontmercy was a plague patient, and they intended to bring up the child after their fashion. The Colonel perhaps did wrong in accepting these terms, but he endured them, in the belief that he was acting rightly, and only sacrificing himself.

The inheritance of the grandfather was a small matter, but that of Mlle Gillenormand the elder was considerable, for this aunt was very rich on her mother's side, and her sister's son was her natural heir. The boy, who was called Marius, knew that he had a father, but nothing more, and no one opened his lips to him on the subject. Still, in the society to which his grandfather took him, the whisperings and winks eventually produced light in the boy's mind; he understood something at last, and, as he naturally accepted, by a species of infiltration and slow penetration, the ideas and opinions which were, so to speak, his breathing medium, he gradually came to think of his father only with shame.

While he was thus growing up in this way, the Colonel every two or three months came furtively to Paris, like a convict who is breaking his ban, and posted himself at St Sulpice, at the hour when Aunt Gillenormand took Marius to Mass. Trembling lest the aunt should turn round, concealed behind a pillar, motionless, and scarce daring to breathe, he looked at this boy—the scarred warrior was frightened at this old maid.

From this very circumstance emanated his friendship with the Abbé Mabœuf, Curé of Vernon. This worthy priest had a brother, churchwarden of St Sulpice, who had several times noticed this man contemplating his child, and the scar on his cheek, and the heavy tear in his eye. This man, who looked so

thoroughly a man, and who wept like a child, struck the churchwarden, and this face adhered to his memory. One day when he went to Vernon to see his brother he met on the bridge Colonel Pontmercy, and recognized his man of St Sulpice. The churchwarden told the affair to the Curé, and both made some excuse to pay a visit to the Colonel. This visit led to others, and the Colonel, though at first very close, eventually opened his heart, and the Curé and the churchwarden learnt the whole story, and how Pontmercy sacrificed his own happiness to the future of his child. The result was that the Curé felt a veneration and tenderness for him, and the Colonel, on his side, took the Curé into his affection. By the way, when both are equally sincere and good, no men amalgamate more easily than an old priest and an old soldier, for they are the same men at the bottom. One devotes himself to his country down here, the other to his country up there ; that is the sole difference.

Twice a year, on January 1st, and St George's day, Marius wrote his father letters dictated by his aunt, and which looked as if copied from a hand-book, for that was all M. Gillenormand tolerated ; and the father sent very affectionate replies, which the grandfather thrust into his pocket without reading.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

REQUIESCANT !

THE salon of Madame de T. was all that Marius Pontmercy knew of the world, and it was the sole opening by which he could look out into life. This opening was gloomy, and more cold than heat, more night than day, reached him through this trap. This boy, who was all joy and light on entering the strange world, became thus, in a short time, sad, and what is more contrary still to his age, serious. Surrounded by all these imposing and singular persons, he looked about him with serious astonishment, and all contributed to augment his stupor. There were in Madame de T.'s drawing-room old, noble, and very venerable ladies, who called themselves Mathau, Noé, Levis, pronounced Levi, and Cambis, pronounced Cambyse. These ancient faces and these Biblical names were mingled in the boy's mind with his Old Testament which he learnt by heart, and when they were all present, seated in a circle round an expiring fire, scarce illumined

by a green shaded lamp, with their severe faces, their grey or white hair, their long dresses of another age, in which only mournful colours could be seen, and uttering at lengthened intervals words at once majestic and stern ; little Marius regarded them with wandering eyes and fancied that he saw not women, but patriarchs, and Magi,—not real beings, but ghosts.

With these ghosts were mingled several priests, habitués of this old salon, and a few gentlemen : the Marquis de Sass ****, secretary to Madame de Berry ; the Vicomte de Val ***, who published odes under the pseudonym of Charles Antoine ; the Prince de Beauf *****, who, though still young, had a grey head and a pretty, clever wife, whose dress of scarlet velvet, with gold embroidery, cut very low in the neck, startled this gloom ; the Marquis de C *****, d'E *****, the Frenchman, who was most acquainted with “ graduated politeness ; ” the Comte d' Am *****, a gentleman with a benevolent chin ; and the Chevalier de Port de Guy, the pillar of the library of the Louvre, called the King's Cabinet. M. de Port de Guy, bald and rather aging than old, used to tell how in 1793, when he was sixteen years of age, he was placed in the hulks as refractory, and chained to an octogenarian, the Bishop of Mirepoix, also a refractory, but as priest, while he was so as soldier. It was at Toulon, and their duty was to go at night to collect on the scaffold the heads and bodies of persons guillotined during the day. They carried these dripping trunks on their backs, and their red jackets had behind the nape of the neck a crust of blood, which was dry in the morning and moist at night. These tragical narratives abounded in the salon of Madame de T., and through cursing Marat they came to applaud Trestaillon. A few deputies of the “ introuvable ” sort played their rubber of whist there ; for instance, M. Thebord du Chalard, M. Lemarihaud de Gomicourt, and the celebrated jester of the right division, M. Cornet Dincourt. The Bailli de Ferrette, with his knee-breeches and thin legs, at times passed through this room, when proceeding to M. de Talleyrand's ; he had been a companion of the Comte d'Artois, and, acting in the opposite way to Aristotle reclining on Campaspe, he had made the Guimard crawl on all fours, and thus displayed to ages a philosopher avenged by a Bailli.

As for the priests, there was the Abbé Halma, the same to whom M. Larose, his fellow-contributor on *la Foudre*, said, “ Stuff, who is not fifty years of age ? a few hobble-de-hoys, perhaps.” Then came the Abbé Letourneur, preacher to the King ; the Abbé Frayssinous, who at that time was neither Bishop, Count, Minister, nor Peer, and who wore a soutane,

from which buttons were absent, and the Abbé Keravenant, Curé of St Germain des Prés. To them must be added the Papal Nuncio, at that date Monsignore Macchi, Archbishop of Nisibi, afterwards Cardinal, and remarkable for his long pensive nose; and another Monsignore, whose titles ran as follow: Abbate Palmieri, domestic Prelate, one of the seven Prothonotaries sharing in the Holy See, Canon of the glorious Librarian Basilica, and advocate of the Saints, *postulatore Dei Santi*, an office relating to matters of canonization, and meaning very nearly, Referendary to the department of Paradise. Finally, there were, too, Cardinal M. de la Luzeren, and M. de C***** T*****. The Cardinal de Luzeren was an author, and was destined to have the honour a few years later of signing articles in the *Conservateur* side by side with Chateaubriand, while M. de C***** T***** was Archbishop of Toulouse, and frequently spent the summer in Paris with his nephew the Marquis de T*****, who had been Minister of the Navy and of War. This Cardinal was a merry little old gentleman, who displayed his red stockings under his ragged cassock. His speciality was hating the Encyclopedia and playing madly at billiards; and persons who on summer evenings passed along the Rue M*****, where the Marquis de T***** resided, stopped to listen to the sound of the balls and the sharp voice of the Cardinal crying to his Conclavist Monseigneur Cottret, Bishop in *partibus* of Caryste, "Mark me a cannon, Abbé." The Cardinal de C***** T***** had been introduced to Madame de T— by his most intimate friend, M. de Roquelaure, ex-Bishop of Senlis and one of the Forty. M. de Roquelaure was remarkable for his great height and his assiduity at the Academy. Through the glass door of the room adjoining the library, in which the French Academy at that time met, curious persons could contemplate every Thursday the ex-Bishop of Senlis, usually standing with hair freshly powdered, in violet stockings, and turning his back to the door, apparently to display his little collar the better. All these ecclesiastics, although mostly courtiers as much as churchmen, added to the gravity of the salon, to which five Peers of France, the Marquis de Vib—, the Marquis de Tal—, the Marquis d'Herb—, the Vicomte Damb—, and the Duc de Val—, imparted the Lordly tone. This Duc de Val—, though Prince de Men—, that is to say, a foreign sovereign prince, had so lofty an idea of France and the Peerage, that he looked at everything through them. It was he who said, "the Cardinals are the Peers of France of Rome, and the Lords are the Peers

of France of England." Still, as in the present age the Revolution must be everywhere, this feudal salon was ruled, as we have seen, by M. Gillenormand, a bourgeois.

It was the essence and quintessence of white Parisian society, and reputations, even royalist ones, were kept in quarantine there, for there is always anarchy in reputation. Had Chateaubriand come in he would have produced the effect of Père Duchesne. Some converts, however, entered this orthodox society through a spirit of toleration. Thus the Comte de Beng*** was admitted for the purpose of correction. The "noble" salons of the present day in no way resemble the one which I am describing, for the Royalists of to-day, let us say it in their praise, are demagogues. At Madame de T's, the society was superior, and the taste exquisite and haughty beneath a grand bloom of politeness. The habits there displayed all sorts of involuntary refinement, which was the ancient régime itself, which lived though interred. Some of these habits, especially in conversation, seemed whimsical, and superficial persons would have been taken for provincialism what was merely antiquated. They called a lady "Madame la Generale," and "Madame la Colonelle" had not entirely been laid aside. The charming Madame de Leon, doubtless remembering the Duchesses de Longueville and de Chevreuse, preferred that appellation to her title of Princess, and the Marquise de Créquy was also called "Madame la Colonelle."

It was this small high society which invented at the Tuileries the refinement of always speaking of the King in the third person, and never saying, "Your Majesty," as that qualification had been "sullied by the usurper." Facts and men were judged there, and the age was ridiculed—which saved the trouble of comprehending it. They assisted one another in amazement, and communicated mutually the amount of enlightenment they possessed. Methusalem instructed Epimenides, and the deaf man put the blind man straight. The time which had elapsed since Coblenz was declared not to have passed, and in the same way as Louis XVIII. was *Dei gratia* in the twenty-fifth year of his reign, the *émigrés* were *de jure* in the twenty-fifth year of their adolescence.

Everything harmonized there: no one was too lively, the speech was like a breath, and the newspapers, in accordance with the salon, seemed a papyrus. The liveries in the anteroom were old, and these personages who had completely passed away were served by footmen of the same character. All this had the air of having lived a long time and obstinately struggling against the tomb. To Conserve, Conservation, Conserva-

tive, represented nearly their entire dictionary, and the question was "to be in good odour." There were really aromatics in the opinions of these venerable groups, and their ideas smelt of vervain. It was a mummy world, in which the masters were embalmed and the servants stuffed. A worthy old Marchioness, ruined by the emigration, who had only one woman-servant left, continued to say, "My people."

What did they do in Madame de T.'s salon? They were ultra. This remark, though what it represents has possibly not disappeared, has no meaning at the present day, so let us explain it. To be ultra is going beyond; it is attacking the sceptre in the name of the throne and the mitre in the name of the altar; it is mismanaging the affair you have in hand; it is kicking over the traces; it is quarrelling with the executioners as to the degree of boiling which heretics should undergo; it is reproaching the idol for its want of idolatry; it is insulting through excess of respect; it is finding in the Pope insufficient Papism, in the King too little royalty, and too much light in the night; it is being dissatisfied with alabaster, snow, the swan, and the lily, on behalf of whiteness; it is being a partizan of things to such a pitch that you become their enemy; it is being so strong for, that you become against.

The ultra spirit specially characterizes the first phase of the Restoration. Nothing in history ever resembled that quarter of an hour which begins in 1814 and terminates in 1820, with the accession of M. de Villele, the practical man of the Right. These six years were an extraordinary moment, at once noisy and silent, silent and gloomy, enlightened, as it were, by a beam of dawn, and covered, at the same time, by the darkness of the great catastrophe which still filled the horizon, and was slowly sinking into the past. There was in this light and this shadow an old society and a new society, buffoon and melancholy, juvenile and senile, and rubbing its eyes, for nothing is so like a re-awaking as a return. There were groups that regarded France angrily and which France regarded ironically; the streets full of honest old Marquis-owls, "ci-devants," stupefied by everything; brave and noble gentlemen smiling at being in France and also weeping at it, ravished at seeing their country again and in despair at not finding their monarchy; the nobility of the Crusades spitting on the nobility of the Empire, that is to say, of the sword; historic races that had lost all feeling of history; the sons of the companions of Charlemagne disdaining the companions of Napoleon. The swords, as we have said, hurled insults at one another; the sword of Fontenoy was ridiculous, and only a bar of rusty iron; the sword of Marengo was odious, and only

a sabre. The olden times misunderstood yesterday, and no one had a feeling of what is great or what is ridiculous. Some one was found to call Bonaparte Scapin. This world no longer exists, and nothing connected with it, let us repeat, remains at the present day. When we draw out of it some figure hap-hazard, and try to bring it to bear again mentally, it seems to us as strange as the ante-diluvian world, and, in fact, it was also swallowed up by a deluge and disappeared under two revolutions. What waves ideas are ! how quickly do they cover whatever they have a mission to destroy and bury, and how promptly do they produce unknown depths !

Such was the physiognomy of the salon in those distant and candid days when M. Martainville had more wit than Voltaire. These salons had a literature and politics of their own : people in them believed in Fiévée, and M. Agier laid down the law there. M. Colnet, the publisher and bookseller of the Quai Malaquais, was commented on, and Napoleon was fully the ogre of Corsica there. At a later date the introduction into history of the Marquis de Buonaparté, Lieutenant-General of the armies of the King, was a concession to the spirit of the age. These salons did not long remain pure, and in 1818 a few doctrinaires, a very alarming tinge, began to culminate in them. In matters of which the ultras were very proud, the doctrinaires were somewhat ashamed ; they had wit, they had silence, their political dogma was properly starched with hauteur, and they must succeed. They carried white neck-cloths and buttoned coats to an excessive length, though it was useful. The fault or misfortune of the doctrinaire party was in creating old youth : they assumed the posture of sages, and dreamed of grafting a temperate power upon the absolute and excessive principle. They opposed, and at times with rare sense, demolishing liberalism by conservative liberalism, and they might be heard saying, "Have mercy on Royalism, for it has rendered more than one service. It brought back traditions, worship, religion, and respect. It is faithful, true, chivalrous, loving, and devoted, and has blended, though reluctantly, the secular grandeurs of the Monarchy with the new grandeurs of the nation. It is wrong in not understanding the Revolution, the Empire, glory, liberty, young ideas, young generations, and the age,—but do we not sometimes act quite as wrongly against it ? The Revolution of which we are the heirs ought to be on good terms with everything. Attacking the Royalists is the contrary of liberalism ; what a fault and what blindness ! Revolutionary France fails in its respect to historic France, that is to say, to its mother, to

itself. After Sept. 5, the nobility of the Monarchy were treated like the nobility of the Empire after July 8; they were unjust to the eagle and we are unjust to the *fleur-de-lys*. There must be, then, always something to proscribe! is it very useful to ungild the crown of Louis XIV., and scratch off the escutcheon of Henri IV.? We sneer at M. de Vaublanc, who effaced the N's from the bridge of Jena, but he only did what we are doing. Bouvines belongs to us as much as Marengo, and the *fleurs-de-lys* are ours like the N's. They constitute our patrimony; then why should we diminish it? The country must be no more denied in the past than in the present; why should we not have a grudge with the whole of history? why should we not love the whole of France?" It was thus that the doctrinaires criticized and protected the royalists, who were dissatisfied at being criticized, and furious at being protected.

The ultras marked the first epoch of the Revolution, and the Congregation characterized the second; skill succeeded impetuosity. Let us close our sketch at this point.

In the course of his narrative, the author of this book found on his road this curious moment of contemporary history, and thought himself bound to take a passing glance at it, and retrace some of the singular features of this society, which is unknown at the present day. But he has done so rapidly, and without any bitter or derisive idea, for affectionate and respectful reminiscences, connected with his mother, attach him to this past. Moreover, let him add, this little world had a grandeur of its own, and though we may smile at it, we cannot despise or hate it. It was the France of other days.

Marius Pontmercy, like most children, received some sort of education. When he left the hands of Aunt Gillenormand, his grandfather intrusted him to a worthy professor of the finest classical innocence. This young mind, just expanding, passed from a prude to a pedant. Marius spent some years at college, and then joined the Law-school; he was royalist, fanatic, and austere. He loved but little his grandfather, whose gaiety and cynicism ruffled him, and he was gloomy as regarded his father. In other respects, he was an ardent yet cold, noble, generous, proud, religious, and exalted youth; worthy almost to harshness, and fierce almost to savageness.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE END OF THE BRIGAND.

THE conclusion of Marius' classical studies coincided with M. Gillenormand's retirement from society; the old gentleman bade farewell to the Faubourg St Germain and Madame de T.'s drawing-room, and withdrew to his house in the Marais. His servants were, in addition to the porter, that Nicolette who succeeded Magnon, and that wheezing, short-winded Basque, to whom we have already alluded. In 1827 Marius attained his seventeenth year; on coming home one evening he saw his grandfather holding a letter in his hand.

"Marius," said M. Gillenormand, "you will start to-morrow for Vernon."

"What for?" Marius asked.

"To see your father."

Marius trembled, for he had thought of everything excepting this, that he might one day be obliged to see his father. Nothing could be more unexpected, more surprising, and, let us add, more disagreeable for him. It was estrangement forced into approximation, and it was not an annoyance so much as a drudgery. Marius, in addition to his motives of political antipathy, was convinced that his father, the trooper, as M. Gillenormand called him in his good-tempered days, did not love him; that was evident, as he had abandoned him thus and left him to others. Not feeling himself beloved, he did not love; and he said to himself that nothing could be more simple. He was so stupefied that he did not question his grandfather, but M. Gillenormand continued,—

"It seems that he is ill, and asks for you."

And after a silence he added,—

"Start to-morrow morning. I believe there is a coach which leaves at six o'clock and gets to Vernon at nightfall. Go by it, for he says that the matter presses."

Then he crumpled up the letter and put it in his pocket. Marius could have started the same night, and have been with his father the next morning; a diligence at that time used to run at night to Rouen, passing through Vernon. But neither M. Gillenormand nor Marius dreamed of inquiring. On the evening of the following day Marius arrived at Vernon, and asked the first passer-by for the house of "Monsieur Pontmercy."

For in his mind he was of the same opinion as the Restoration, and did not recognize either his father's Barony or Colonelcy. The house was shown him; he rang, and a woman holding a small hand-lamp opened the door for him.

"Monsieur Pontmercy?" Marius asked.

The woman stood motionless.

"Is this his house?" Marius continued.

The woman shook her head in the affirmative.

"Can I speak to him?"

The woman made a negative sign.

"Why, I am his son," Marius added; "and he expects me."

"He no longer expects you," the woman said.

Then he noticed that she was crying; she pointed to the door of a parlour, and he went in. In this room, which was lighted by a tallow candle placed on the mantel-piece, there were three men, one standing, one on his knees, and one lying full length upon the floor in his shirt. The one on the floor was the Colonel; the other two were a physician and a priest praying. The Colonel had been attacked by a brain fever three days before, and having a foreboding of evil, he wrote to M. Gillenormand, asking for his son. The illness grew worse, and on the evening of Marius' arrival at Vernon, the Colonel had an attack of delirium. He leaped out of bed, in spite of the maid-servant, crying, "My son does not arrive, I will go to meet him." Then he left his bed-room, and fell on the floor of the ante-room;—he had just expired. The physician and the curé were sent for, but both arrived too late; the son too had also arrived too late. By the twilight gleam of the candle, a heavy tear, which had fallen from the Colonel's dead eye, could be noticed on his pallid cheek. The eye was lustreless, but the tear had not dried up. This tear was his son's delay.

Marius gazed upon this man whom he saw for the first time and the last, upon this venerable and manly face, these open eyes which no longer saw, this white hair, and the robust limbs upon which could be distinguished here and there brown lines, which were sabre cuts, and red stars, which were bullet holes. He gazed at the gigantic scar which imprinted heroism on this face, upon which God had imprinted gentleness. He thought that this man was his father, and that this man was dead, and he remained cold. The sorrow he felt was such as he would have felt in the presence of any other man whom he might have seen lying dead before him.

Mourning and lamentation were in this room. The maid-servant was weeping in a corner, the priest was praying, and could be heard sobbing, the physician wiped his eyes, and the

corpse itself wept. The physician, priest, and woman looked at Marius through their affliction without saying a word, for he was the stranger. Marius, who was so little affected, felt ashamed and embarrassed at his attitude, and he let the hat which he held in his hand fall on the ground, in order to induce a belief that sorrow deprived him of the strength to hold it. At the same time he felt a species of remorse, and despised himself for acting thus. But was it his fault? he had no cause to love his father.

The Colonel left nothing, and the sale of the furniture scarce covered the funeral expenses. The maid-servant found a scrap of paper, which she handed to Marius. On it were the following lines, written by the Colonel.

"For my son. The Emperor made me a Baron on the field of Waterloo, and as the Restoration contests this title, which I purchased with my blood, my son will assume it and wear it. Of course he will be worthy of it." On the back the Colonel had added, "At this same battle of Waterloo a sergeant saved my life, his name is Thénardier, and I believe that he has recently kept a small inn in a village near Paris, either Chelles or Montfermeil. If my son meet this Thénardier he will do all he can for him."

Not through any affection for his father, but owing to that vague respect for death which is ever so imperious in the heart of man, Marius took this paper and put it away. Nothing was left of the Colonel. M. Gillenormand had his sword and uniform sold to the Jews; the neighbours plundered the garden, and carried off the rare flowers, while the others became brambles and died. Marius only remained forty-eight hours in Vernon. After the funeral he returned to Paris and his legal studies, thinking no more of his father than if he had never existed. In two days the Colonel was buried, and in three forgotten.

Marius had a crape on his hat, and that was all.

CHAPTER XXXV.

MARIUS MEETS A CHURCHWARDEN.

MARIUS had retained the religious habits of his childhood. One Sunday, when he went to hear Mass at St Sulpice, in the

same Lady's Chapel to which his aunt took him when a boy, being on that day more than usually absent and thoughtful, he placed himself behind a pillar, and knelt, without paying attention to the fact, upon a Utrecht velvet chair, on the back of which was written, "Monsieur Mabeuf, Churchwarden." The Mass had scarce begun when an old gentleman presented himself, and said to Marius,—

"This is my place, sir."

Marius at once stepped aside, and the old gentleman took his seat. When Mass was ended Marius stood pensively for a few moments, till the old gentleman came up to him and said,—

"I ask your pardon, sir, for having disturbed you just now, and for troubling you afresh at this moment, but you must have considered me ill-bred, and so I wish to explain the matter to you."

"It is unnecessary, sir," said Marius.

"No, it is not," the old man continued, "for I do not wish you to have a bad opinion of me. I am attached to this seat, and it seems to me that the Mass is better here, and I will tell you my reason. To this spot I saw during ten years, at regular intervals of two or three months, a poor worthy father come, who had no other opportunity or way of seeing his son, because they were separated through family arrangements. He came at the hour when he knew that his son would be brought to Mass. The boy did not suspect that his father was here—perhaps did not know, the innocent, that he had a father. The latter kept behind a pillar so that he might not be seen, looked at his child and wept; for the poor man adored him, as I could see. This spot has become, so to speak, sanctified for me, and I have fallen into the habit of hearing Mass here. I prefer it to the bench to which I should have a right as Churchwarden. I even knew the unfortunate gentleman slightly. He had a father-in-law, a rich aunt, and other relatives, who threatened to disinherit the boy if the father ever saw him, and he sacrificed himself that his son might one day be rich and happy. They were separated through political opinions, and though I certainly approve of such opinions, there are persons who do not know where to stop. Good gracious! because a man was at Waterloo he is not a monster; a father should not be separated from his child on that account. He was one of Bonaparte's colonels, and is dead, I believe. He lived at Vernon, where I have a brother who is curé, and his name was something like Pontmarie, Montpercy—he had, on my word, a splendid sabre cut."

"Pontmercy," Marius said, turning pale.

"Precisely, Pontmercy; did you know him?"

"He was my father, sir."

The old churchwarden clasped his hands and exclaimed,—

"Ah! you are the boy! Yes, yes, he would be a man now. Well, poor boy, you may say that you had a father who loved you dearly."

Marius offered his arm to the old gentleman, and conducted him to his house. The next day he said to M. Gillenormand,—

"Some friends of mine have arranged a shooting party, will you allow me to go away for three days?"

"Four," the grandfather answered, "go and amuse yourself;" and he whispered to his daughter with a wink, "Some love affair!"

Where Marius went we shall learn presently. He was away three days, then returned to Paris, went straight to the Library of the Law-school, and asked for a file of the *Moniteur*. He read it, he read all the histories of the Republic and the Empire; the Memorial of St Helena, all the memoirs, journals, bulletins, and proclamations—he fairly devoured them. The first time he came across his father's name in a bulletin of the grand army he had a fever for a whole week. He called upon the generals under whom George Pontmercy had served; among others, Count H—. The churchwarden, whom he saw again, told him of the life at Vernon, the Colonel's retirement, his flowers, and his solitude. Marius had at last a perfect knowledge of this rare, sublime, and gentle man, this species of lion-lamb—who had been his father.

While occupied with this study, which filled all his moments as well as all his thoughts, he scarce ever saw the Gillenormands. He appeared at meals, but when sought for after them he could not be found. His aunt sulked, but old Gillenormand smiled. "Stuff, stuff, it is the right age;" at times the old man would add, "Confound it, I thought that it was an affair of gallantry, but it seems that it is a passion." It was a passion in truth, for Marius was beginning to adore his father.

At the same time an extraordinary change took place in his ideas, and the phases of this change were numerous and successive. As this is the history of many minds in our day, we deem it useful to follow these phases step by step, and indicate them all. The history he had just read startled him, and the first effect was bedazzlement. The Republic, the Empire, had hitherto been to him but monstrous words,—the Republic a guillotine in the twilight; the Empire a sabre in

the night. He had looked into it, and where he had only expected to find a chaos of darkness he had seen, with a species of extraordinary surprise, mingled with fear and delight, stars flashing,—Mirabeau, Vergniaud, Saint Just, Robespierre, Camille Desmoulins, and Danton,—and a sun rise, Napoleon. He knew not where he was, and he recoiled, blinded by the brilliancy. Gradually, when the first surprise had worn off, he accustomed himself to this radiance. He regarded the deed without dizziness, and examined persons without terror; the Revolution and the Empire stood out in luminous perspective before his visionary eyeballs; he saw each of these two groups of events and facts contained in two enormous facts; the Revolution in the sovereignty of civic right restored to the masses, the Empire in the sovereignty of the French idea imposed on Europe; he saw the great figure of the people emerge from the Revolution, the great figure of France from the Empire, and he declared to himself on his conscience that all this was good.

What his bedazzlement neglected in this first appreciation, which was far too synthetical, we do not think it necessary to indicate here. We are describing the state of a mind advancing, and all progress is not made in one march. This said, once for all, as to what precedes and what is to follow, we will continue.

He then perceived, that up to this moment he had no more understood his country than he did his father. He had known neither the one nor the other, and he had spread a species of voluntary night over his eyes. He now saw, and on one side he admired, on the other he adored. He was full of regret and remorse, and he thought with despair that he could only tell to a tomb all that he had in his mind. Oh, if his father were alive, if he had him still, if God in His compassion and His goodness had allowed this father to be still alive, how he would have flown, how he would have cried to his father,—“Father, here I am, it is I! I have the same heart as you! I am your son!” How he would have kissed his white head, bathed his hair with his tears, gazed at his scar, pressed his hand, adored his clothes, and embraced his feet! Oh, why did this father die so soon, before justice had been done him, before he had known his son’s love? Marius had a constant sob in his heart, which said at every moment, “Alas!” At the same time he became more truly serious, more truly grave, more sure of his faith and his thoughts. At each instant beams of light arrived to complete his reason, and a species of internal growth went on within him. He felt a natural aggrandizement pro-

duced by the two things so new to him—his father and his country.

As a door can be easily opened when we hold the key, he explained to himself what he had hated, and understood what he had abhorred. Henceforth he saw clearly the providential, divine, and human meaning, the great things which he had been taught to detest, and the great men whom he had been instructed to curse. When he thought of his previous opinions, which were but of yesterday, and which yet seemed to him so old, he felt indignant and smiled. From the rehabilitation of his father he had naturally passed to that of Napoleon, but the latter, we must say, was not effected without labour. From childhood he had been imbued with the judgments of the party of 1814 about Bonaparte; now all the prejudices of the Restoration, all its interests, and all its instincts, tended to disfigure Napoleon, and it execrated him, even more than Robespierre. It had worked rather cleverly upon the weariness of the nation, and the hatred of mothers. Bonaparte had become a species of almost fabulous monster, and in order to depict him to the imagination of the people, which, as we said just now, resembles that of children, the party of 1814 brought forward in turn all the frightful masques, from that which is terrible while remaining grand, down to that which is terrible while becoming grotesque, from Tiberius down to old Boguey. Hence, in speaking of Bonaparte, people were at liberty to sob or burst with laughter, provided that hatred sung the bass. Marius had never had on the subject of—that man, as he was called—any other ideas but these in his mind, and they were combined with his natural tenacity. He was a headstrong little man, who hated Napoleon.

On reading history, on studying before all documents and materials, the veil which hid Napoleon from Marius' sight was gradually rent asunder, he caught a glimpse of something immense, and suspected that up to this moment he had been mistaken about Bonaparte, as about all the rest; each day he saw more clearly, and he began climbing slowly, step by step, at the beginning almost reluctantly, but then with intoxication, and as if attracted by an irresistible fascination, first, the gloomy steps, then the dimly-lighted steps, and at last the luminous and splendid steps of enthusiasm.

One night he was alone in his little garret, his candle was lighted, and he was reading at a table by the open window. All sorts of reveries reached him from the space, and were mingled with his thoughts. What a spectacle is night! we

hear dull sounds and know not whence they come ; we see Jupiter, which is twelve hundred times larger than the earth, glowing like a fire-ball ; the blue is black, the stars sparkle, and the whole forms a formidable sight. He was reading the bulletins of the grand army, those Homeric strophes written on the battle-field ; he saw in them at intervals the image of his father, and ever that of the Emperor ; the whole of the great Empire was before him ; he felt, as it were, a tide within him swelling and mounting ; it seemed at moments as if his father passed close to him like a breath, and whispered in his ear ; he gradually became strange, he fancied he could hear drums, cannon, and bugles, the measured tread of the battalions, and the hollow distant gallop of the cavalry ; from time to time his eyes were raised and surveyed the colossal constellations flashing in the profundities, and then they fell again upon the book, and he saw in that other colossal things stirring confusedly. His heart was contracted, he was transported, trembling and gasping ; and all alone, without knowing what was within him or what he obeyed, he rose, stretched his arms out of the window, looked fixedly at the shadow, the silence, the dark infinitude, the eternal immensity, and shouted, " Long live the Emperor ! "

From this moment it was all over. The ogre of Corsica, the usurper, the tyrant, the monster, who was the lover of his own sisters, the actor who took lessons of Talma, the prisoner of Jaffa, the tiger, Buonaparté,—all this faded away, and made room in his mind for a radiance in which the pale marble phantom of Cæsar stood out serenely at an inaccessible height. The Emperor had never been to his father more than the beloved captain, whom a man admires and for whom he devotes himself, but to Marius he was far more. He was the predestined constructor of the French group which succeeded the Roman group in the dominion of the universe, he was the prodigious architect of an earthquake, the successor of Charlemagne, Louis XI., Henri IV., Richelieu, Louis XIV., and the Committee of public safety ; he had doubtless his spots, his faults, and even his crimes, that is to say, he was a man, but he was august in his faults, brilliant in his spots, and powerful in his crime. He was the predestined man who compelled all nations to say,—The great nation. He was even more, he was the very incarnation of France, conquering Europe by the sword he held, and the world by the lustre which he emitted. Marius saw in Bonaparte the dazzling spectre which will ever stand on the frontier and guard the future. He was a despot, but a dictator,—a despot resulting from a republic, and completing a revolution. Napoleon

became for him the man-people, as the Saviour is the man-God.

As we see, after the fashion of all new converts to a religion, his conversion intoxicated him and he dashed into faith and went too far. His nature was so; once upon an incline, it was impossible to check himself. Fanaticism for the sword seized upon him, and complicated in his mind the enthusiasm for the idea; he did not perceive that he admired force as well as genius, that is to say, filled up the two shrines of his idolatry, on one side that which is divine, on the other that which is brutal: He also deceived himself on several other points, though in a different way; he admitted everything. There is a way of encountering error by going to meet the truth, and by a sort of violent good faith, which accepts everything unconditionally. Upon the new path he had entered, while judging the wrongs of the ancient régime and measuring the glory of Napoleon, he neglected attenuating circumstances.

However this might be, a prodigious step was made; where he had once seen the downfall of monarchy he now saw the accession of France. The points of his moral compass were changed, and what had once been sunset was now sunrise; and all these revolutions took place in turns, without his family suspecting it. When, in this mysterious labour, he had entirely lost his old Bourbonic and Ultra skin, when he had pulled off the aristocrat, the Jacobite, and the Royalist, when he was a perfect Revolutionist, profoundly democratic, and almost republican, he went to an engraver's and ordered one hundred cards, with the address "Baron Marius Pontmercy." This was but the logical consequence of the change which had taken place in him, a change in which everything gravitated round his father. Still, as he knew nobody and could not show his cards at any porter's lodge, he put them in his pocket.

By another natural consequence, in proportion as he drew nearer to his father, his memory, and the things for which the Colonel had fought during five-and-twenty years, he drew away from his grandfather. As we said, M. Gillenormand's humour had not suited him for a long time past, and there already existed between them all the dissonances produced by the contact of a grave young man with a frivolous old man. The gaiety of Geronte offends and exasperates the melancholy of Werther. So long as the same political opinions and ideas had been common to them, Marius met his grandfather upon them as on a bridge, but when the bridge fell there was a great gulf between them; and then, before all else, Marius had indescribable attacks

of revolt when he reflected that it was M. Gillenormand who, through stupid motives, pitilessly tore him from the Colonel, thus depriving father of son and son of father. Through his reverence for his father, Marius had almost grown into an aversion from his grandfather.

Nothing of this, however, was revealed in his demeanour; he merely became colder than before, laconic at meals, and rarely at home. When his aunt scolded him for it he was very gentle, and alleged as excuse his studies, examinations, conferences, &c. The grandfather, however, still adhered to his infallible diagnostic,—“He is in love, I know the symptoms.” Marius was absent every now and then.

“Where can he go?” the aunt asked.

In one of his trips, which were always very short, he went to Montfermeil in order to obey his father’s intimation, and sought for the ex-Sergeant of Waterloo, Thénardier, the landlord. Thénardier had failed, the public-house was shut up, and no one knew what had become of him. In making this search Marius remained away for four days.

“He is decidedly getting out of order,” said the grandfather.

They also fancied they could notice that he wore under his shirt something fastened round his neck by a black ribbon.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

SOME PETTICOAT.

WE have alluded to a lancer: he was a great-grand-nephew of M. Gillenormand’s, on the father’s side, who led a garrison life, far away from the domestic hearth. Lieutenant Theodule Gillenormand fulfilled all the conditions required for a man to be a pretty officer: he had a young lady’s waist, a victorious way of clanking his sabre, and turned-up moustaches. He came very rarely to Paris, so rarely that Marius had never seen him, and the two cousins only knew each other by name. Theodule was, we think we said, the favourite of Aunt Gillenormand, who preferred him because she never saw him; for not seeing people allows of every possible perfection being attributed to them.

One morning Mille Gillenormand the elder returned to

her apartments, as much affected as her general placidity would allow. Marius had again asked his grandfather's permission to make a short trip, adding that he wished to start that same evening. "Go," the grandfather answered; and he added to himself, as he pursed up his eye, "Another relapse of sleeping from home." Mlle Gillenormand went up to her room greatly puzzled, and cast to the staircase this exclamation, "It's too much!" and this question, "But where is it that he goes?" She caught a glimpse of some more or less illicit love adventure, of a woman in the shadow, a meeting, a mystery, and would not have felt vexed to have a closer peep at it through her spectacles. Scenting a mystery is like the first bite at a piece of scandal, and holy souls do not detest it. In the secret compartments of bigotry there is some curiosity for scandal.

She was, therefore, suffering from a vague appetite to learn a story. In order to distract this curiosity, which agitated her a little beyond her wont, she took refuge in her talents, and began festooning with cotton upon cotton one of those embroideries of the Empire and the Restoration, in which there are a great many cabriolet wheels. It was a clumsy job, and the workwoman was awkward. She had been sitting over it for some hours when the door opened. Mlle Gillenormand raised her nose, and saw Lieutenant Theodule before her, making his regulation salute. She uttered a cry of delight; for a woman may be old, a prude, devout, and an aunt, but she is always glad to see a lancer enter her room.

"You here, Theodule!" she exclaimed.

"In passing, my dear aunt."

"Well, kiss me."

"There," said Theodule, as he kissed her. Aunt Gillenormand walked to her secretaire and opened it.

"You will stop the week out?"

"My dear aunt, I am off again to-night."

"Impossible!"

"Mathematically."

"Stay, my little Theodule, I beg of you."

"The heart says Yes, but duty says No. The story is very simple; we are changing garrison; we were at Melun, and are sent to Gaillon. In order to go to the new garrison we were obliged to pass through Paris, and I said to myself, 'I will go and see my aunt.'"

"And here's for your trouble."

And she slipped ten louis into his hand.

"You mean to say for my pleasure, dear aunt."

Theodule kissed her a second time, and she had the pleasure of having her neck slightly grazed by his gold-laced collar.

"Are you travelling on horseback, with your regiment?"

"No, my aunt: I have come to see you by special permission. My servant is leading my horse, and I shall travel by the diligence. By the way, there is one thing I want to ask you."

"What is it?"

"It appears that my cousin Marius Pontmercy is going on a journey too?"

"How do you know that?" the aunt said, her curiosity being greatly tickled.

"On reaching Paris I went to the coach-office to take my place in the *coupé*."

"Well?"

"A traveller had already taken a seat in the *Impériale*, and I saw his name in the way-bill: it was Marius Pontmercy."

"Oh, the scamp," the aunt exclaimed. "Ah! your cousin is not a steady lad like you. To think that he is going to pass the night in a diligence!"

"Like myself."

"You do it through duty, but he does it through disorder."

"The deuce!" said Theodule.

Here an event occurred to Mademoiselle Gillenormand the elder: she had an idea. If she had been a man she would have struck her forehead. She addressed Theodule.

"You are aware that your cousin does not know you?"

"I have seen him, but he never deigned to notice me."

"Where is the diligence going to?"

"To Andelys."

"Is Marius going there?"

"Unless he stops on the road, like myself. I get out at Vernon, to take the Gaillon coach. I know nothing about Marius' route."

"Marius! what an odious name! what an idea it was to call him that! well, your name, at least, is Theodule."

"I would rather it was Alfred," the officer said.

"Listen, Theodule; Marius absents himself from the house."

"Eh, eh!"

"He goes about the country."

"Ah, ah!"

"He sleeps out."

"Oh, oh!"

"We should like to know the meaning of all this."

Theodule replied, with the calmness of a bronze man, "Some petticoat!"

And with that inward chuckle which evidences a certainty, he added, "Some gurl!"

"That is evident!" the aunt exclaimed, who believed that she heard M. Gillenormand speaking, and who felt his conviction issue irresistibly from that word "gurl," accentuated almost in the same way by grand-uncle and grand-nephew. She continued,—

"Do us a pleasure by following Marius a little. As he does not know you, that will be an easy matter. Since there is a girl in the case, try to get a look at her, and write and tell us all about it, for it will amuse your grandfather."

Theodule had no excessive inclination for this sort of watching, but he was greatly affected by the ten louis, and he believed he could see a possible continuation of such gifts. He accepted the commission, and said, "As you please, aunt," and added in an aside, "I am a Duenna now!"

Mlle Gillenormand kissed him.

"You would not play such tricks as that, Theodule, for you obey discipline, are the slave of duty, and a scrupulous man, and would never leave your family to go and see a creature."

The lancer made the satisfied grimace of Cartouche when praised for his probity.

Marius, on the evening that followed this dialogue, got into the diligence, not suspecting that he was watched. As for the watcher, the first thing he did was to fall asleep, and his sleep was complete and conscientious. Argus snored the whole night. At day-break the guard shouted, "Vernon; passengers for Vernon, get out here!" and Lieutenant Theodule got out.

"All right," he growled, still half asleep, "I get out here."

Then his memory growing gradually clearer, he thought of his aunt, the ten louis, and the account he had promised to render of Marius' sayings and doings. This made him laugh.

"He is probably no longer in the coach," he thought, while buttoning up his jacket. "He may have stopped at Poissy, he may have stopped at Triel, if he did not get out at Meulan, he may have done so at Mantes, unless he stopped at Rolleboise, or only went as far as Passy, with the choice of turning on his left to Estreux, or on his right to La Rocheguyon.

Run after him, aunty. What the deuce shall I write to the old lady?"

At this moment the leg of a black trouser appeared against the window-pane of the *coupé*.

"Can it be Marius?" the lieutenant said.

It was Marius. A little peasant girl was offering flowers to the passengers, and crying "Bouquets for your ladies." Marius went up to her, and bought the finest flowers in her basket.

"By Jove," said Theodule, as he leaped out of the *coupé*, "the affair is growing piquant. Who the deuce is he going to carry those flowers to? she must be a deucedly pretty woman to deserve so handsome a bouquet. I must have a look at her."

And then he began following Marius, no longer by order, but through personal curiosity, like those dogs which hunt on their own account. Marius paid no attention to Theodule. Some elegant women were getting out of the diligence, but he did not look at them; he seemed to see nothing around him.

"He must be precious in love," Theodule thought. Marius proceeded toward the church.

"That's glorious!" Theodule said to himself, "the church, that's the thing. Rendezvous spiced with a small amount of mass are the best. Nothing is so exquisite as an ogle exchanged in the presence of the Virgin."

On reaching the church, Marius did not go in, but disappeared behind one of the buttresses of the apse.

"The meeting outside," Theodule said; "now for a look at the gurl."

And he walked on tip-toe up to the corner which Marius had gone round, and on reaching it stopped in stupefaction. Marius, with his forehead in both his hands, was kneeling in the grass upon a tomb, and had spread his flowers out over it. At the head of the grave was a cross of black wood, with this name in white letters,—"**COLONEL BARON PONTMERCY.**" Marius could be heard sobbing.

The girl was a tomb.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

MARBLE AGAINST GRANITE.

It is hither that Marius had come the first time that he absented himself from Paris; it was to this spot he retired each time that M. Gillenormand said,—“He sleeps out.” Lieutenant Theodule was absolutely discountenanced by this unexpected elbowing of a tomb, and felt a disagreeable and singular sensation, which he was incapable of analyzing, and which was composed of respect for a tomb, mingled with respect for a colonel. He fell back, leaving Marius alone in the cemetery, and there was discipline in this retreat; death appeared to him wearing heavy epaulettes, and he almost gave it the military salute. Not knowing what to write to his aunt, he resolved not to write at all; and there would probably have been no result from Theodule’s discovery of Marius’ amour had not, by one of those mysterious arrangements so frequent in accident, the scene at Vernon had almost immediately a sort of counterpart in Paris.

Marius returned from Vernon very early on the morning of the third day, and wearied by two nights spent in a diligence, and feeling the necessity of repairing his want of sleep by an hour at the swimming-school, he hurried up to his room, only took the time to take off his travelling coat and the black ribbon which he had round his neck, and went to the bath. M. Gillenormand, who rose at an early hour like all old men who are in good health, heard him come in, and hastened as quick as his old legs would carry him up the stairs leading to Marius’ garret, in order to welcome him back, and try and discover his movements. But the young man had taken less time in descending than the octogenarian in ascending, and when Father Gillenormand entered the garret Marius was no longer there. The bed had been unoccupied, and on it lay the coat and black ribbon unsuspectingly.

“I prefer that,” said M. Gillenormand, and a moment later he entered the drawing-room, where Mlle Gillenormand the elder was already seated embroidering her cabriolet wheels. The entrance was triumphant, M. Gillenormand held in one hand the coat, in the other the neck-ribbon, and shouted,—

“Victory! we are going to penetrate the mystery, we are going to know the cream of the joke, we are going to lay our

hands on the libertinage of our cunning gentleman. Here is the romance itself, for I have the portrait."

In fact, a box of shagreen leather, much like a miniature, was suspended from the ribbon. The old man took hold of this box, and looked at it for some time without opening, with the air of pleasure, eagerness, and anger of a poor starving fellow, who sees a splendid dinner, of which he will have no share, carried past under his nose.

"It is evidently a portrait, and I am up to that sort of thing. It is worn tenderly on the heart,—what asses they are! some abominable gorgon, who will probably make me shudder, for young men have such bad tastes now-a-days."

"Let us look, father," the old maid said.

The box opened by pressing a spring, but they only found in it a carefully folded-up paper.

"*From the same to the same,*" said M. Gillenormand, bursting into a laugh. "I know what it is, a billet-doux!"

"Indeed! let us read it," said the aunt; and she put on her spectacles. They unfolded the paper and read as follows,—

"*For my son.* The Emperor made me a Baron on the field of Waterloo, and as the Restoration contests this title which I purchased with my blood, my son will assume it and wear it; of course he will be worthy of it."

What the father and daughter felt, it is not possible to describe; but they were chilled as if by the breath of a death's head. They did not exchange a syllable. M. Gillenormand merely said in a low voice, and as if speaking to himself, "It is that trooper's hand-writing." The hand examined the slip of paper, turned it about in all directions, and then placed it again in the box.

At the same instant, a small square packet, wrapped up in blue paper, fell from a pocket of the great-coat. Mlle Gillenormand picked it up and opened the blue paper. It contained Marius' one hundred cards, and she passed one to M. Gillenormand, who read, "Baron Marius Pontmercy." The old man rang, and Nicolette came in. M. Gillenormand took the ribbon, the box, and the coat, threw them on the ground in the middle of the room, and said,—

"Remove that rubbish."

A long hour passed in the deepest silence; the old man and the old maid were sitting back to back and thinking, probably both of the same things. At the end of this hour, Mlle Gillenormand said,—"Very pretty!" A few minutes after, Marius came in; even before he crossed the threshold he perceived his grandfather holding one of his cards in his hand. On seeing

Marius he exclaimed, with his air of bourgeois and grimacing superiority, which had something crushing about it,—

"Stay! stay! stay! stay! stay! You are a Baron at present; I must congratulate you. What does this mean?"

Marius blushed slightly, and answered,—

"It means that I am my father's son."

M. Gillenormand left off laughing, and said harshly,—*"I am your father."*

"My father," Marius continued with downcast eyes and a stern air, "was an humble and heroic man, who gloriously served the Republic of France, who was great in the greatest history which men have ever made, who lived for a quarter of a century in a bivouac, by day under a shower of grape-shot and bullets, and at night in snow, mud, wind, and rain. He was a man who took two flags, received twenty wounds, died in forgetfulness and abandonment, and who had never committed but one fault, that of loving too dearly two ungrateful beings—his country and myself."

This was more than M. Gillenormand could bear; at the word Republic he had risen, or, more correctly, sprung up. Each of the words that Marius had just uttered had produced on the old gentleman's face the same effect as the blast of a forge-bellows upon a burning log. From gloomy he became red, from red, purple, and from purple, flaming.

"Marius," he shouted, "you abominable boy! I know not who your father was, and do not wish to know. I know nothing about it, but what I do know is, that there never were any but scoundrels among all those people; they were all rogues, assassins, red-caps, robbers! I say all, I say all! I know nobody! I saw all; do you understand me, Marius? You must know that you are as much a Baron as my slipper is! They were all bandits who served Robespierre! they were all brigands who served B-u-o-naparté! all traitors who betrayed, betrayed, betrayed their legitimate king! all cowards who ran away from the Prussians and the English at Waterloo. That is what I know. If your father was among them, I am ignorant of the fact, and am sorry for it. I am your humble servant!"

In his turn, Marius became the brand, and M. Gillenormand the bellows. Marius trembled all over, he knew not what to do, and his head was a-glow. He was the priest who sees his consecrated wafers cast to the wind, the Fakir who notices a passer-by spit on his idol. It was impossible that such things could be said with impunity in his presence, but what was he to do? His father had just been trampled under foot, and insulted in his presence, but by whom? by his grandfather.

How was he to avenge the one without outraging the other? It was impossible for him to insult his grandfather, and equally impossible for him not to avenge his father. On one side was a sacred tomb, on the other was white hair. He tottered for a few moments like a drunken man, then raised his eyes, looked fixedly at his grandfather, and shouted in a thundering voice,—

“Down with the Bourbons, and that great pig of a Louis XVIII.!”

Louis XVIII. had been dead four years, but that made no difference to him. The old man, who had been scarlet, suddenly became whiter than his hair. He turned to a bust of the Duc de Berry which was on the mantel-piece, and bowed to it profoundly with a sort of singular majesty. Then he walked twice, slowly and silently, from the mantel-piece to the window, and from the window to the mantel-piece, crossing the whole room, and making the boards creak as if he were a walking marble statue. The second time he leant over his daughter, who was looking at the disturbance with the stupor of an old sheep, and said to her with a smile which was almost calm,—

“A Baron like this gentleman, and a bourgeois like myself, can no longer remain beneath the same roof.”

And suddenly drawing himself up, livid, trembling, and terrible, with his forehead dilated by the fearful radiance of passion, he stretched out his arm toward Marius, and shouted, “Begone!”

Marius left the house, and on the morrow M. Gillenormand said to his daughter,—

“You will send every six months sixty pistoles to that blood-drinker, and never mention his name to me.”

Having an immense amount of fury to expend, and not knowing what to do with it, he continued to address his daughter as “you” instead of “thou” for upwards of three months.

Marius, on his side, left the house indignant, and a circumstance aggravated his exasperation. There are always small fatalities of this nature to complicate domestic dramas: the anger is augmented although the wrongs are not in reality increased. In hurriedly conveying, by the grandfather's order, Marius' rubbish to his bed-room, Nicolette, without noticing the fact, let fall, probably on the attic stairs, which were dark, the black shagreen case in which was the paper written by the Colonel. As neither could be found, Marius felt convinced that “Monsieur Gillenormand”—he never called him otherwise from that date—had thrown “his father's will” into the fire. He knew by heart the few lines written by the Colonel, and, consequently, nothing was lost; but the paper, the writing, this sacred relic,—all this was his heart. What had been done with it?

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Marius went away without saying where he was going and without knowing, with thirty francs, his watch, and some clothes in a carpet-bag. He jumped into a cabriolet, engaged it by the hour, and proceeded at all risks towards the Pays latin. What would become of Marius ?

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A GROUP THAT NEARLY BECAME HISTORICAL.

At this epoch, which was apparently careless, a certain revolutionary quivering was vaguely felt. There were breezes in the air which returned from the depths of '89 and '92 ; and the young men, if we may be forgiven the expression, were in the moulting stage. Men became transformed, almost without suspecting it, by the mere movement of time, for the hand which moves round the clock-face also moves in the mind. Each took the forward step he had to take ; the Royalists became liberals, and the Liberals democrats. It was like a rising tide complicated by a thousand ebbs, and it is the peculiarity of ebbs to cause things to mingle. Hence came very singular combinations of ideas, and men adored liberty and Napoleon at the same time. We are writing history here, and such were the mirages of that period. Opinions pass through phases, and Voltairian royalism, a strange variety, had a no less strange pendant in Bonapartist liberalism.

Other groups of minds were more serious ; at one spot principles were sounded, and at another men clung to their rights. They became impassioned for the absolute, and obtained glimpses of infinite realizations ; for the absolute, through its very rigidity, causes minds to float in the illimitable æther. There is nothing like the dogma to originate a dream, and nothing like a dream to engender the future ; the Utopia of to-day is flesh and bone to-morrow. Advanced opinions had a false bottom, and a commencement of mystery threatened "Established order," which was suspicious and cunning. This is a most revolutionary sign. The after-thought of the authorities meets in the sap the after-thought of the people, and the incubation of revolutions is the reply to the premeditation of Coups d'Etat. There were not as yet in France any of those vast subjacent organizations, like the Tugen bund of Germany

or the Carbonari of Italy; but here and there were dark subterranean passages with extensive ramifications. The Cougourde was started at Aix; and there was at Paris, among other affiliations of this nature, the society of the friends of the A. B. C.

Who were the friends of the A. B. C.? A society, whose ostensible object was the education of children, but the real one the elevation of men. They called themselves friends of the A. B. C., and the people were the *Abaissés* whom they wished to raise. It would be wrong to laugh at this pun, for puns at times are serious in politics; witnesses of this are the *Castratus ad castra*, which made Narses general of an army; the *Barbari* and *Barberini*; *fueros fuegos*; *tu es Petrus et super hanc Petram*, &c. &c. The friends of the A. B. C. were few in number; it was a secret society, in a state of embryo, and we might almost call it a coterie, if coteries produced heroes. They assembled at two places in Paris; at a cabaret called *Corinthe* near the Halles, to which we shall revert hereafter, and near the Pantheon, in a small café on the Place St Michel, known as the Café Musain, and now demolished: the first of these meeting-places was contiguous to the workmen, and the second to the students. The ordinary discussions of the friends of the A. B. C. were held in a back room of the Café Musain. This room, some distance from the coffee-room, with which it communicated by a very long passage, had two windows and an issue by a secret staircase into the little Rue des Grés. They smoked, drank, played, and laughed there; they spoke very loudly about everything, and in a whisper about the other thing. On the wall hung an old map of France under the Republic, which would have been a sufficient hint for a police-agent.

Most of the friends of the A. B. C. were students, who maintained a cordial understanding with a few workmen. Here are the names of the principal members, which belong in a certain measure to history, — Enjolras, Combeferre, Jean Prouvaire, Feuilly, Courfeyrac, Bahorel, Lesgle or Laigle, Joly, and Grantaire. These young men formed a species of family through their friendship, and all came from the South, excepting Laigle. This group is remarkable, although it has vanished in the invisible depths which are behind us. At the point of this drama which we have now attained, it will not be labour lost, perhaps, to throw a ray of light upon these heads, before the reader watches them enter the shadows of a tragical adventure.

Enjolras, whom we named first, it will be seen afterwards

why, was an only son, and rich. He was a charming young man, capable of becoming terrible; he was angelically beautiful, and looked like a stern Antinous. On noticing the pensive depth of his glance you might have fancied that he had gone through the revolutionary apocalypse in some preceding existence. He knew the traditions of it like an eye-witness, and was acquainted with all the minor details of the great thing. His was a pontifical and warlike nature, strange in a young man; he was a churchman and a militant; from the immediate point of view a soldier of democracy, but, above the contemporary movement, a priest of the ideal. He had a slightly red eyelid, a thick and easily disdainful lower lip, and a lofty forehead; a good deal of forehead on a face is like a good deal of sky in an horizon. Like certain young men of the beginning of the present century and the end of the last, who became illustrious at an early age, he looked excessively young, and was as fresh as a school-girl, though he had his hours of pallor. Although a man, he seemed still a boy, and his two-and-twenty years looked like only seventeen; he was serious, and did not appear to know that there was on the earth a being called woman. He had only one passion, justice, and only one thought, overthrowing the obstacle. On the Mons Aventinus, he would have been Gracchus; in the Convention, he would have been St Just. He scarcely noticed roses, was ignorant of spring, and did not hear the birds sing; the bare throat of Evadne would have affected him as little as it did Aristogiton; to him, as to Harmodius, flowers were only good to conceal the sword. He was stern in his joy, and before all that was not the Republic, he chastely lowered his eyes—he was the marble lover of liberty. His language had a sharp inspiration and a species of rhythmic strain. Woe to the girl who ventured to ensnare him! If any grisette of the Place Cambray, or the Rue St Jean de Beauvais, seeing this face so like that of a page, his long light lashes, his blue eyes, his hair floating wildly in the breeze, his pink cheeks, cherry lips, and exquisite teeth, had felt a longing for all this dawn, and tried the effect of her charms upon Enjolras, a formidable look of surprise would have suddenly shown her the abyss, and taught her not to confound the avenging cherub of Ezekiel with the gallant cherub of Beaumarchais.

By the side of Enjolras, who represented the logic of the revolution, Combeferre represented its philosophy. Between the logic and the philosophy of revolutions, there is this difference, that the logic may conclude in war, while its philosophy can only lead to peace. Combeferre completed and rectified

Enjolras; he was not so tall, but broader. He wished that the extended principles of general ideas should be poured over minds, and said, "Revolution but civilization!" and he opened the vast blue horizon around the peaked mountain. Hence there was something accessible and practicable in all Combeferre's views; and the revolution with him was more respectable than with Enjolras. Enjolras expressed its divine right and Combeferre its natural right, and while the former clung to Robespierre, the latter bordered upon Condorcet. Combeferre loved more than Enjolras the ordinary life of mankind; and if these two young men had gained a place in history, the one would have been the just man, the other the sage. Enjolras was more manly, Combeferre more humane, and the distinction between them was, that between *homo* and *vir*. Combeferre was gentle as Enjolras was stern, through natural whiteness; he loved the word citizen, but preferred man, and would have gladly said *Hombre*, like the Spaniards. He read everything, went to the theatres, attended the public lectures, learned from Arago the polarization of light, and grew quite excited about a lecture in which Geoffroy Saint Hilaire explained the double functions of the external and internal carotid arteries, the one which makes the face, and the other which produces the brain; he was conversant with, and followed, science step by step, confronted St Simon with Fourier, deciphered hieroglyphics, broke pebbles which he found, drew from memory a bombyx butterfly, pointed out the errors in French in the Dictionary of the Academy, studied Puysegur and Deleuze, affirmed nothing, not even miracles, denied nothing, not even ghosts, turned over the file of the *Moniteur* and reflected. He declared that the future is in the hand of the schoolmaster, and busied himself with educational questions. He wished that society should labour without relaxation at the elevation of the intellectual and moral standard, at coining science, bringing ideas into circulation, and making the minds of youth grow; and he feared that the present poverty of methods, the wretchedness from the literary point of view of confining studies to two or three centuries called classical, the tyrannical dogmatism of official pedants, scholastic prejudices, and routine would in the end convert our colleges into artificial oyster-beds. He was learned, a purist, polite, and Polytechnic, a delver, and at the time pensive, "even to a chimera," as his friends said. He believed in all dreams, railways, the suppression of suffering in surgical operations, fixing the image of the camera obscura, electric telegraphy, and the steering of balloons. He was but slightly terrified by the citadels built on all sides

against the human race by superstitions, despotisms, and prejudices, for he was one of those men who think that science will in the end turn the position. Enjolras was a chief, and Combeferre a guide; you would have liked to fight under one and march with the other. Not that Combeferre was incapable of fighting, he did not refuse to seize obstacles round the waist and attack them by main force; but it pleased him better to bring the human race into harmony with its destiny, gradually, by the instruction of axioms and the promulgation of positive laws; and with a choice between two lights, his inclination was for illumination rather than fire. A fire may certainly produce a dawn, but why not wait for day-break? A volcano illumines, but the sun does so far better. Combeferre perhaps preferred the whiteness of the beautiful to the flashing of the sublime, and a brightness clouded by smoke, a progress purchased by violence, only half satisfied his tender and serious mind. A headlong hurling of a people into the truth, a '93, startled him; still stagnation was more repulsive to him, for he smelt in it putrefaction and death. Altogether he liked foam better than miasma, and preferred the torrent to the sewer, and the falls of Niagara to the lake of Montfauçon. In a word, he desired neither halt nor haste, and while his tumultuous friends who were chivalrously attracted by the absolute, adored and summoned the splendid revolutionary adventurer, Combeferre inclined to leave progress, right progress, to act—it might be cold but it was pure, methodical but irreproachable, and phlegmatic but imperturbable. Combeferre would have knelt down and prayed that this future might arrive with all its candour, and that nothing might disturb the immense virtuous evolution of the peoples. *The good must be innocent*, he repeated incessantly. And in truth, if the grandeur of the revolution is to look fixedly at the dazzling ideal, and fly toward it through the lightning, with blood and fire in the claws, the beauty of progress is to be unspotted; and there is between Washington, who represents the one, and Danton, who is the incarnation of the other, the same difference as that which separates the angel with the swan's wings from the angel with the eagle's wings.

Jean Prouvaire was of an even softer tinge than Combeferre; he was called "Jehan," through that little momentary fantasy which was blended with the powerful and profound movement, from which issued the most necessary study of the middle ages. Jean Prouvaire was in love, cultivated a pot of flowers, played the flute, wrote verses, loved the people,

pitied women, wept over children, confounded in the same confidence the future and God, and blamed the Revolution for having caused a royal head to fall, that of André Chénier. He had a voice which was habitually delicate, and suddenly became masculine; he was erudite, and almost an Orientalist. He was good before all, and through a motive which those will easily understand who know how closely goodness borders on grandeur,—he loved immensity in poetry. He knew Italian, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and he employed his knowledge to read only four poets,—Dante, Juvenal, Æschylus, and Isaiah. In French he preferred Corneille to Racine, and Agrippa d'Aubigné to Corneille. He was fond of strolling about the fields of wild oats and corn-flowers, and occupied himself with clouds almost as much as with events. His mind had two attitudes,—one turned to man, the other to God; he either studied or contemplated. The whole day long he studied social questions,—wages, capital, credit, marriage, religion, liberty of thought, liberty of love, education, the penal code, wretchedness, partnership, property, production, and division, that enigma of the lower world which casts a shadow over the human ant-heap, and at night he looked at the stars, those enormous beings. Like Enjolras, he was rich, and an only son; he talked softly, hung his head, looked down, smiled with an embarrassed air, dressed badly, had an awkward gait, blushed at a nothing, and was very timid; with all that he was intrepid.

Feuilly was a journeyman fan-maker, doubly an orphan, who laboriously earned three francs a day, and had only one idea—to deliver the world. He had another pre-occupation as well, instructing himself, which he called self-deliverance. He had taught himself to read and write; and all that he knew he had learned alone. Feuilly had a generous heart, and hugged the world. This orphan had adopted the peoples, and as he had no mother, he meditated on his country. He had wished that there should not be in the world a man who had no country, and he brooded over what we now call the “idea of nationalities” with the profound divination of the man of the people. He had studied history expressly that he might be indignant with a knowledge of the fact, and in this youthful assembly of Utopians who were specially interested about France, he represented the foreign element. His speciality was Greece, Poland, Roumania, Hungary, and Italy; he pronounced these names incessantly, in season and out of season, with the tenacity of right. The violations committed by Turkey on Greece and Thessaly, of Russia on Warsaw, and Austria on Venice,

exasperated him, and above all the great highway-robbery of 1772 aroused him. There can be no more sovereign eloquence than truth in indignation, and he was eloquent with that eloquence. He never left off talking about the infamous date 1772, the noble and valiant people suppressed by treachery, this crime committed by three accomplices, and the monstrous ambush, which is the prototype and pattern of all those frightful suppressions of states, which have since struck several nations, and have, so to speak, erased their name from the baptismal register. All the social assaults of the present day emanate from the division of Poland, and it is a theorem, to which all our political crimes are corollaries. There is not a despot or a traitor who for a century past has not revised, confirmed, countersigned, and margined with the words *ne varietur*, the division of Poland. When we consult the list of modern treasons this appears the first, and the Congress of Vienna consulted this crime ere it consummated its own; 1772 sounds the mort, and 1815 witnesses the gralloching of the stag. Such was Feuilly's usual text. This poor workman had made himself the guardian of justice, and she rewarded him by making him grand. In truth, there is an eternity in justice, and Warsaw can no more be Tartar than Venice German. Kings lose their time and their honour over such things. Sooner or later, the submerged country floats on the surface and reappears. Greece becomes Greece once more, and Italy, Italy. The protest of right against deeds persists for ever, and there is no law of prescription for the robbery of a nation. Such high acts of swell-mobbing have no future, and the mark cannot be taken out of a nation like a handkerchief.

Courfeyrac had a father who was known as M. de Courfeyrac. One of the incorrect ideas of the bourgeoisie of the Restoration in the matter of the aristocracy and the nobility was a belief in the particule. The particule, as we know, has no meaning, but the bourgeois of the time of the *Minerve* esteemed this poor *de* so highly that persons thought themselves obliged to abdicate it. M. de Chauvelin called himself M. Chauvelin, M. de Caumartin M. Caumartin, M. de Constant de Rebecque Benjamin Constant, and M. de Lafayette M. Lafayette. Courfeyrac was unwilling to remain behindhand, and called himself Courfeyrac quite short. As concerns this gentleman, we might almost stop here and content ourselves with saying as to the rest, *for Courfeyrac read Tholomyès; Courfeyrac, in fact, had those sallies of youth which might be called a mental beauté du diable.* At a later date this expires like the pretti-

ness of the kitten; and all this grace produces, upon two feet the bourgeois, and on four paws the tom-cat.

The generations which pass through the schools, and the successive levies of youth, transmit this species of wit from one to the other, and pass it from hand to hand, *quasi cursores*, nearly always the same; so that, as we have said, the first comer who had listened to Courfeyrac in 1828 might have fancied he was hearing Tholomyès in 1817. The only thing was that Courfeyrac was an honest fellow, and beneath an apparent external similitude, the difference between Tholomyès and himself was great, and the latent man who existed within them was very other in the former from what it was in the latter. In Tholomyès there was an attorney, and in Courfeyrac a Paladin; Enjolras was the chief, Combeferre the guide, and Courfeyrac the centre. The others gave more light, but he produced more heat; and he had in truth all the qualities of a centre, in the shape of roundness and radiation.

Bahorel had been mixed up in the sanguinary tumult of June, 1822, on the occasion of the burial of young Lallemand. Bahorel was a being of good temper and bad company, an honest fellow and a spendthrift, prodigal and meeting with generosity, chattering and meeting with eloquence, bold and meeting with effrontery; and the very best clay for the devil's moulding imaginable. He displayed daring waistcoats and scarlet opinions; he was a turbulent on a grand scale, that is to say, that he liked nothing so much as a quarrel unless it were an emeute, and nothing so much as an emeute except a revolution. He was ever ready to break a pane of glass, tear up the paving-stones, and demolish a government, in order to see the effect—he was a student in his eleventh year. He sniffed at the law, but did not practise it, and he had taken as his motto "never a lawyer," and as his coat of arms a night-table surmounted by a square cap. Whenever he passed in front of the Law school, which rarely happened to him, he buttoned up his frock-coat and took hygienic precautions. He said of the school gate, "What a fierce old man!" and of the Dean M. Devincourt, "What a monument!" He found in his lectures a subject for coarse songs, and in his professors an occasion for laughter. He spent in doing nothing a very considerable allowance, something like three thousand francs, and his parents were peasants in whom he had inculcated a respect for their son. He used to say of them, "They are peasants, and not towns-people, that is why they are so intelligent." Bahorel, as a capricious man, visited several cafés; and while the others had habits he had none. He strolled about: if *errare* is hu-

man, strolling is Parisian. Altogether, he had a penetrating mind, and thought more than people fancied. He served as the connecting link between the Friends of the A. B. C. and other groups which were still unformed, but which were to be constituted at a later date.

There was in this assembly of young men a bald-headed member. The Marquis d'Avaray, whom Louis XVIII. made a duke because he helped him to get into a hired cab on the day when he emigrated, used to tell how, when the King landed in 1814 at Calais upon his return to France, a man handed him a petition.

"What do you want?" the King said.

"A postmastership, sire."

"What is your name?"

"L'Aigle."

The King frowned, but looked at the signature of the petition, and read the name thus written, LESGLE. This, anything but Bonapartist orthography, touched the King, and he began smiling. "Sire," the man with the petition went on, "my ancestor was a whipper-in of the name of Lesgueules, and my name came from that. I called myself Lesgueules, by contraction Lesgle, and by corruption L'Aigle." This remark caused the King to smile still more, and at a later date he gave the man the post-office at Meaux, purposely or through a mistake. The bald Mentor of the group was son of this Lesgle or Legle, and signed himself Legle (of Meaux). His comrades, to shorten this, called him Bossuet, who, as everybody knows, was christened the Eagle of Meaux.

Bossuet was a merry fellow, who was unlucky, and his speciality was to succeed in nothing. *Per contrà*, he laughed at everything. At the age of five-and-twenty he was bald; his father left him a house and a field, but the son knew nothing so pressing as to lose them both in a swindling speculation, and nothing was left him. He had learning and sense, but he failed in everything and everything cozened him; whatever he built up broke down under him. If he chopped wood, he cut his fingers; and if he had a mistress, he speedily discovered that she had also a friend. At every moment some misfortune happened to him, and hence came his joviality; and he used to say, "I live under the roof of falling tiles." Feeling but slight astonishment, for every accident was foreseen by him, he accepted ill-luck serenely, and smiled at the pin-pricks of destiny like a man who is listening to a good joke. He was poor, but his wallet of good-temper was inexhaustible; he speedily reached his last halfpenny, but never his last laugh. When adversity

entered his room he bowed to his old acquaintance cordially; he tickled catastrophes in the ribs, and was so familiar with fatality as to call it by a nick-name.

These persecutions of fate had rendered him inventive, and he was full of resources. He had no money, but contrived to make a "frenzied outlay" whenever he thought proper. One night he went so far as to devour a hundred francs in a supper with a girl, which inspired him in the middle of the orgie with the memorable remark, "*Fille de cinq Louis (Saint Louis) ; pull off my boots.*" Bossuet was advancing slowly to the legal profession, and studied law much after the fashion of Bahorel. Bossuet had but little domicile, at times none at all, and he lived first with one and then with the other, but most frequently with Joly.

Joly was a student of medicine, of two years' younger standing than Bossuet, and was the young imaginary sick man. What he had gained by his medical studies was to be more a patient than a doctor, for at the age of twenty-three he fancied himself a valetudinarian, and spent his life in looking at his tongue in a mirror. He declared that a man becomes magnetized like a needle, and in his room he placed his bed with the head to the south and the feet to the north, so that at night the circulation of his blood might not be impeded by the great magnetic current of the globe. In storms he felt his pulse, but for all that was the gayest of all. All these incoherences, youth, mania, dyspepsia, and fun, lived comfortably together, and the result was an eccentric and agreeable being, whom his comrades, lavish of liquid consonants, called Jolly. Joly was accustomed to touch his nose with the end of his cane, which is the sign of a sagacious mind.

All these young men, who differed so greatly, and of whom, after all, we must speak seriously, had the same religion,—Progress. They were all the direct sons of the French Revolution, and the lightest among them became serious when pronouncing the date of '89. Their fathers in the flesh were, or had been, *feuilletants*, royalists, or doctrinaires, but that was of little consequence; this pell-mell, anterior to themselves, who were young, did not concern them, and the pure blood of principles flowed in their veins; they attached themselves, without any intermediate tinge, to incorruptible right and absolute duty.

Amid all these impassioned hearts and convinced minds there was a sceptic; how did he get there? through juxtaposition. The name of this sceptic was Grantaire, and he usually wrote it after the manner of a charade,—R.* Grantaire was a

* Grantaire = Grand R.

man who carefully avoided believing in anything; he was, however, one of these students who had learned the most during a Parisian residence. He knew that the best coffee was at Lemblrier's, and the best billiard-table at the Café Voltaire; that excellent cakes and agreeable girls could be found at the Hermitage on the Boulevard du Maine, spatch-cocks at Mother Saquet's, excellent matelottes at the Barrière de la Cunette, and a peculiar white wine at the Barrière du Combat. Besides all this, he was a mighty drinker. He was abominably ugly, and Irma Boissy, the prettiest boot-binder of that day, in her indignation at his ugliness, passed the verdict,—“Grantaire is impossible.” But Grantaire's fatuity was not disconcerted by this. He looked tenderly and fixedly at every woman, and assumed an expression of “If I only liked!” and he tried to make his companions believe that he was in general request with the sex.

All such words as rights of the people, rights of man, the social contract, the French Revolution, republic, democracy, humanity, civilization, progress, had as good as no meaning with Grantaire, and he smiled at them. Scepticism, that curse of the intellect, had not left him one whole idea in his mind. He lived in irony, and his axiom was, “There is only one thing certain, my full glass.” He ridiculed every act of devotion in every party,—the brother as much as the father, young Robespierre as heartily as Loizerolles. “They made great progress by dying,” he would exclaim; and would say of the crucifix, “There is a gallows which was successful.” Idler, gambler, libertine, and often intoxicated, he annoyed these young democrats by incessantly singing, “*J'aimons les filles et j'aimons le bon vin*,” to the tune of “Long live Henri IV.”

This sceptic, however, had a fanaticism; it was neither an idea, a dogma, an act, nor a sense; it was a man,—Enjolras. Grantaire admired, loved, and revered Enjolras. Whom did this anarchical doubter cling to in this phalanx of absolute minds? to the most absolute. In what way did Enjolras subjugate him? by ideas? No, but by character. This is a frequently-observed phenomena, and a sceptic who clings to a believer is as simple as the law of complementary colours. What we do not possess attracts us; no one loves daylight like the blind man; the dwarf adores the drum-major, and the frog has its eyes constantly fixed on heaven to see the bird fly. Grantaire, in whom doubt grovelled, liked to see faith soaring in Enjolras, and he felt the want of him, without clearly understanding it, or even dreaming of explaining the fact to himself. This chaste, healthy, firm, upright, harsh, and candid nature

charmed him, and he instinctively admired his contrary. His soft, yielding, dislocated, sickly, and shapeless ideas attached themselves to Enjolras as to a vertebra, and his moral rickets supported themselves by this firmness. Grantaire, by the side of Enjolras, became somebody again; and he was, moreover, himself composed of two apparently irreconcilable elements,—he was ironical and cordial. His mind could do without belief, but his heart could not do without friendship. This is a profound contradiction, for an affection is a conviction, but his nature was so. There are some men apparently born to be the reverse of the coin, and their names are Pollux, Patroclus, Nisus, Eudamidas, Ephestion, and Pechmeja. They only live on the condition of being backed by another man; their name is a continuation, and is never written except preceded by the conjunction *and*; their existence is not their own, but is the other side of a destiny which is not theirs. Grantaire was one of these men.

We might almost say that affinities commence with the letters of the alphabet, and in the series, O and P are almost inseparable. You may, as you please, say O and P, or Orestes and Pylades. Grantaire, a true satellite of Enjolras, dwelt in this circle of young men: he lived there, he solely enjoyed himself there, and he followed them everywhere. His delight was to see their shadows coming and going through the fumes of wine, and he was tolerated for his pleasant humour. Enjolras, as a believer, disdained this sceptic, and as a sober man loathed this drunkard, but he granted him a little haughty pity. Grantaire was an unaccepted Pylades: constantly repulsed by Enjolras, harshly rejected, and yet returning, he used to say of him, "What a splendid statue!"

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A FUNERAL ORATION.

ON a certain afternoon, which, as we shall see, has some coincidence with the events recorded above, Laigle de Meaux was sensually leaning against the door-post of the Café Musain. He looked like a caryatid out for a holiday, and having nothing to carry but his reverie. Leaning on one's shoulder is a mode of lying down upright which is not disliked by dreamers.

Laigle de Meaux was thinking, without melancholy, of a slight misadventure which had occurred to him on the previous day but one at the Law-school, and modified his personal plans for the future, which, as it was, were somewhat indistinct.

Reverie does not prevent a cabriolet from passing, or a dreamer from noticing the cabriolet. Laigle, whose eyes were absently wandering, saw through this somnambulism a two-wheeled vehicle moving across the Place St Michel at a foot-pace and apparently undecided. What did this cab want? why was it going so slowly? Laigle looked at it, and saw inside a young man seated by the side of the driver, and in front of the young man a carpet-bag. The bag displayed to passers-by this name, written in large black letters on the card sewn to the cloth, **MARIUS PONTMERCY**. This name made Laigle change his attitude: he drew himself up, and shouted to the young man in the cab, "M. Marius Pontmercy."

The cab stopped, on being thus hailed, and the young man, who also appeared to be thinking deeply, raised his eyes.

"Hilloh?" he said,—

"Are you M. Pontmercy?"

"Yes."

"I was looking for you," Laigle of Meaux continued.

"How so?" asked Marius, for it was really he, who had just left his grandfather's, and had before him a face which he saw for the first time. "I do not know you."

"And I don't know you either."

Marius fancied that he had to do with a practical joker, and, as he was not in the best of tempers at the moment, frowned. Laigle imperturbably continued,—

"You were not at lecture the day before yesterday!"

"Very possibly."

"It is certain."

"Are you a student?" Marius asked.

"Yes, sir, like yourself. The day before yesterday I entered the Law-school by chance; as you know, a man has an idea like that sometimes. The Professor was engaged in calling over, and you are aware how ridiculously strict they are in the school at the present moment. Upon the third call remaining unanswered, your name is erased from the list, and sixty francs are gone."

Marius began to listen, and Laigle continued,—

"It was Blondeau who was calling over. You know Blondeau has a pointed and most malicious nose, and scents the absent with delight. He craftily began with the letter P, and I did not listen, because I was not compromised by that letter. The roll-call went on capitally, there was no erasure, and the

universe was present. Blondeau was sad, and I said to myself aside, 'Blondeau, my love, you will not perform the slightest execution to-day.' All at once Blondeau calls out, 'Marius Pontmercy.' No one answered, and so Blondeau, full of hope, repeats in a louder voice, 'Marius Pontmercy,' and takes up his pen. I have bowels, sir, and said to myself hurriedly, 'The name of a good fellow is going to be erased. Attention! he is not a proper student, a student who studies, a reading man, a pedantic sap, strong in science, literature, theology, and philosophy. No, he is an honourable idler, who lounges about, enjoys the country, cultivates the grisette, pays his court to the ladies, and is perhaps with my mistress at this moment. I must save him: death to Blondeau!' At this moment Blondeau dipped his pen, black with erasures, into the ink, looked round his audience, and repeated for the third time, 'Marius Pontmercy!' I answered, 'Here!' and so your name was not erased."

"Sir!" Marius exclaimed.

"And mine was," Laigle of Meaux added.

"I do not understand you," said Marius.

Laigle continued,—

"And yet it was very simple. I was near the desk to answer, and near the door to bolt. The Professor looked at me with a certain fixedness, and suddenly Blondeau, who must be the crafty nose to which Boileau refers, leaps to the letter L, which is my letter, for I come from Meaux, and my name is L'Eagle."

"L'Aigle!" Marius interrupted, "what a glorious name."

"Blondeau arrives, sir, at that glorious name, and exclaims 'L'Aigle!'" I answer, 'Here!' Then Blondeau looks at me with the gentleness of a tiger, smiles, and says,—'If you are Pontmercy you are not Laigle,' a phrase which appears offensive to you, but which was only lugubrious for me. After saying this, he erased me."

Marius exclaimed,—

"I am really mortified, sir,—"

"Before all," Laigle interrupted, "I ask leave to embalm Blondeau in a few phrases of heart-felt praise. I will suppose him dead, and there will not be much to alter in his thinness, paleness, coldness, stiffness, and smell, and I say, *Erudimini qui judicatis terram*. Here lies Blondeau the nosy, Blondeau Nasica, the ox of discipline, *bos disciplinæ*, the mastiff of duty, the angel of the roll-call, who was straight, square, exact, rigid, honest, and hideous. God erased him as he erased me."

Marius continued, "I am most grieved—"

"Young man," said Laigle, "let this serve you as a lesson ; in future be punctual."

"I offer you a thousand apologies."

"And do not run the risk of getting your neighbour erased."

"I am in despair—"

Laigle burst into a laugh.

"And I am enchanted. I was on the downward road to become a lawyer, and this erasure saves me. I renounce the triumphs of the bar. I will not defend the orphan or attack the widow. I have obtained my expulsion, and I am indebted to you for it, M. Pontmercy. I intend to pay you a solemn visit of thanks, —where do you live?"

"In this cab," said Marius.

"A sign of opulence," Laigle remarked calmly; "I congratulate you, for you have apartments at nine thousand francs a year."

At this moment Courfeyrac came out of the café. Marius smiled sadly.

"I have been in this lodging for two hours, and am eager to leave it, but I do not know where to go."

"Come home with me," Courfeyrac said to him.

"I ought to have the priority," Laigle observed, "but then I have no home."

"Hold your tongue, Bossuet," Courfeyrac remarked.

"Bossuet," said Marius, "why you told me your name was Laigle."

"Of Meaux," Laigle answered, "metaphorically, Bossuet."

Courfeyrac got into the cab.

"Hotel de la Porte St Jacques, driver," he said.

The same evening, Marius was installed in a room in this house, next door to Courfeyrac.

CHAPTER XL.

MARIUS IS ASTONISHED.

In a few days Marius was a friend of Courfeyrac, for youth is the season of prompt weldings and rapid cicatrisations. Marius by the side of Courfeyrac breathed freely, a great

novelty for him. Courfeyrac asked him no questions, and did not even think of doing so, for at that age faces tell everything at once, and words are unnecessary. There are some young men of whose countenances you may say that they gossip,—you look at them and know them. One morning, however, Courfeyrac suddenly asked him the question,—

“By the way, have you any political opinion?”

“Of course!” said Marius, almost offended by the question.

“What are you?”

“Bonapartist—democrat.”

“The grey colour of the reassured mouse,” Courfeyrac remarked.

On the next day he led Marius to the Café Musain, and whispered in his ear with a smile, “I must introduce you to the Revolution,” and he led him to the room of the Friends of the A. B. C. He introduced him to his companions, saying in a low voice, “a pupil,” which Marius did not at all comprehend. Marius had fallen into a mental wasps’ nest, but though he was silent and grave, he was not the less winged and armed.

Marius, hitherto solitary, and muttering soliloquies and asides through habit and taste, was somewhat startled by the swarm of young men around him. The tumultuous movement of all these minds at liberty and at work made his ideas whirl, and at times, in his confusion, they flew so far from him that he had a difficulty in finding them again. He heard philosophy, literature, art, history, and religion spoken of in an unexpected way; he caught a glimpse of strange aspects, and as he did not place them in perspective, he was not sure that he was not gazing at chaos. On giving up his grandfather’s opinions for those of his father, he believed himself settled; but he now suspected, anxiously, and not daring to confess it to himself, that it was not so. The angle in which he looked at everything was beginning to be displaced afresh, and a certain oscillation shook all the horizons of his brain. It was a strange internal moving of furniture, and it almost made him ill.

It seemed as if there were no “sacred things” for these young men, and Marius heard singular remarks about all sorts of matters which were offensive to his still timid mind. A play-bill came under notice, adorned with the title of an old stock tragedy, of the so-called classical school. “Down with the tragedy dear to the bourgeois!” Bahorel shouted, and Marius heard Combeferre reply,—

"You are wrong, Bahorel. The cits love tragedy, and they must be left at peace upon that point. Periwigged tragedy has a motive, and I am not one of those who for love of Æschylus contests its right to exist. There are sketches in nature and ready-made parodies in creation; a beak which is no beak, wings which are no wings, gills which are no gills, feet which are no feet, a dolorous cry which makes you inclined to laugh—there you have the duck. Now, since poultry exist by the side of the bird, I do not see why classic tragedy should not exist face to face with ancient tragedy."

Or else it happened accidentally that Marius passed along the Rue Jean Jacques Rousseau between Enjolras and Courfeyrac, and the latter seized his arm.

"Pay attention! this is the Rue Plûtrière, now called Rue Jean Jacques Rousseau, on account of a singular family that lived here sixty years back, and they were Jean Jacques and Thérèse. From time to time little creatures were born; Thérèse fondled them, and Jean Jacques took them to the Foundling."

And Enjolras reproved Courfeyrac.

"Silence before Jean Jacques! for I admire that man. I grant that he abandoned his children, but he adopted the people."

Not one of these young men ever uttered the words,—the Emperor; Jean Prouvaire alone sometimes said Napoleon; all therest spoke of Bonaparte. Enjolras pronounced it Buonaparte. Marius was vaguely astonished—it was *initium sapientiæ*.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE BACK ROOM OF THE CAFÉ MUSAIN.

ONE of the conversations among the young men at which Marius was present, and in which he mingled now and then, was a thorough shock for his mind. It came off in the back room of the Café Musain, and nearly all the friends of the A. B. C. were collected on that occasion, and the chandelier was solemnly lighted. They talked about one thing and another, without passion and with noise, and with the exception of Enjolras and Marius, who were silent; each harangued somewhat haphazard. Conversations among chums at times display these peaceful tumults. It was a game and a pell-mell as much as

a conversation; words were thrown and caught up, and students were talking in all the four corners.

No female was admitted into this back room, excepting Louison, the washer-up of cups, who crossed it from time to time to go from the wash-house to the "laboratory." Grantaire, who was frightfully intoxicated, was deafening the corner he had seized upon, by shouting things, reasonable and unreasonable, in a thundering voice:—

"I am thirsty, mortals, I have dreamt that the tun of Heidelberg had a fit of apoplexy, and that I was one of the dozen leeches applied to it. I want to drink, for I desire to forget life. Life is a hideous invention of somebody whom I am unacquainted with. It lasts no time and is worth nothing, and a man breaks his neck to live. Life is a scenery in which there are no practicable, and happiness is an old side-scene only painted on one side. The Ecclesiastes says, All is vanity, and I agree with the worthy gentleman, who possibly never existed. Zero, not liking to go about naked, clothed itself in vanity. Oh vanity! the dressing up of everything in big words! A kitchen is a laboratory, a dancer a professor, a mountebank a gymnast, a boxer a pugilist, an apothecary a chemist, a barber an artist, a bricklayer an architect, a jockey a sportsman, and a wood-louse a pterygibranch. Vanity has an obverse and a reverse; the obverse is stupid,—it is the negro with his glass-beads; the reverse is ridiculous,—it is the philosopher in his rags. I weep over the one and laugh at the other. What are called horrors and disasters, and even horror and dignity, are generally made of mosaic. Kings make a toy of human pride. Caligula made a horse a consul, and Charles II. knighted a sirloin of beef. Drape yourselves, therefore, between Incitatus Consul and Sir Roastbeef. As to the intrinsic value of people, it is not one bit more respectable; just listen to the panegyric which one neighbour makes of another. White upon white is ferocious. If the lily could talk, how it would run down the dove; and a bigoted woman talking of a pious woman is more venomous than the asp and the whip-snake. It is a pity that I am an ignoramus, for I would quote a multitude of things, but I know nothing. But for all that I have always had sense; when I was a pupil of Gros, instead of daubing sketches, I spent my time in priggish apples. So much for myself, but you others are as good as I, and I would not give a dump for your perfections, excellency, and qualities, for every quality has its corresponding defect. The saving man is akin to the miser, the generous man is very nearly related to the prodigal, and the brave man

trenches on the braggart. When you call a man very pious, you mean that he is a little bigoted, and there are just as many vices in virtue as there are holes in the mantle of Diogenes. Which do you admire, the killed or the killer, Cæsar or Brutus? People generally stick up for the killer; Long live Brutus! for he was a murderer. Such is virtue; it may be virtue, but it is folly at the same time. There are some queer spots on these great men; the Brutus who killed Cæsar was in love with the statue of a boy. This statue was made by the Greek sculptor Strongylion, who also produced that figure of an Amazon called Finelegs, Euchnemys, which Nero carried about with him when travelling. This Strongylion only left two statues, which brought Brutus and Nero into harmony; Brutus was in love with one and Nero with the other. History is but one long repetition, and one century is a plagiarism of another. The battle of Marengo is a copy of the battle of Pydna, and the Tolbiac of Clovis and the Austerlitz of Napoleon are as much alike as two drops of blood. I set but little value on victory; nothing is so stupid as conquering, and the true glory is convincing. But try to prove anything! you satisfy yourself with success, what mediocrity! and with conquering, what a wretched trifle! Alas! vanity and cowardice are everywhere, and everything obeys success, even grammar. *Si volet usus*, as Horace says. Hence I despise the whole human race. Suppose we descend from universals to particulars? would you wish me to begin admiring the peoples? what people, if you please? is it Greece?—the Athenians? The Parisians of former time killed Phocion, as you might say Coligny, and adulated tyrants to such a pitch that Anacephorus said of Pisistratus, ‘his urine attracts the bees.’ The most considerable man in Greece for fifty years was the grammarian Philetas, who was so short and small that he was obliged to put lead in his shoes to keep the wind from blowing him away. On the great square of Corinth there was a statue sculptured by Selamon, and catalogued by Pliny, and it represented Episthatus. What did Episthatus achieve? He invented the cross-buttock. There you have a summary of Greece and glory, and now let us pass to others. Should I admire England? should I admire France? France, why? on account of Paris? I have just told you my opinion of the Athenians. England, why? on account of London? I hate Carthage, and, besides, London, the metropolis of luxury, is the head-quarters of misery: in Charing Cross parish alone one hundred persons die annually of starvation. Such is Albion, and I will add, as crowning point, that I have seen an English woman dancing in a wreath of roses and with blue spectacles.

So, a groan for England. If I do not admire John Bull, ought I to admire brother Jonathan with his peculiar institution? Take away 'Time is money,' and what remains of England? take away 'Cotton is king,' and what remains of America? Germany is lymph and Italy bile. Shall we go into ecstasies about Russia? Voltaire admired that country, and he also admired China. I allow that Russia has its beauties, among others a powerful despotism; but I pity the despots, for they have a delicate health. An Alexis decapitated, a Peter stabbed, a Paul strangled, another Paul flattened out with boot-heels, sundry Ivans butchered, several Nicholases and Basils poisoned—all this proves that the palace of the Emperor of Russia is in a flagrantly unhealthy condition. All the civilized nations offer to the admiration of the thinker one detail, war: now, war, civilized war, exhausts and collects all the forms of banditism, from the brigandages of the trabuceros in the gorges of Mont Jaxa down to the forays of the Comanche Indians in the Doubtful Pass. Stuff, you will say to me, Europe is better than Asia after all. I allow that Asia is absurd, but I do not exactly see what cause you have to laugh at the grand Lama, you great western nations, who have blended with your fashions and elegances all the complicated filth of majesty, from the dirty chemise of Queen Isabelle down to the *chaise-percée* of the Dauphin. At Brussels the most beer is consumed, at Stockholm the most brandy, at Madrid the most chocolate, at Amsterdam the most gin, at London the most wine, at Constantinople the most coffee, and at Paris the most absinthe,—these are all useful notions. Paris, after all, bears away the bell, for in that city the very rag-pickers are sybarites: and Diogenes would have soon have been a rag-picker on the Place Maubert as a philosopher at the Piræus. Learn this fact also: the wine-shops of the rag-pickers are called 'bibines,' and the most celebrated are the *Casseroles* and the *Abattoirs*. Oh, wine-shops of the rag-pickers, cavaransaraïs for caliphs, I call you to witness. I am a voluptuary. I dine at Richard's for fifty sous, and I want Persian carpets in which to roll the naked Cleopatra. Where is Cleopatra? ah, it is you, Louison? Good evening."

Thus poured forth Grantaire, more than drunk, as he seized the plate-washer as she passed his corner. Bossuet, stretching out his hand toward him, strove to make him be silent, but Grantaire broke out afresh.

"Eagle of Meaux, down with your paws; you produce no effect upon me with your gesture of Hippocrates refusing the *bric à brac* of Artaxerxes. You need not attempt to calm me, and besides I am melancholy. What would you have me say?"

man is bad, man is a deformity ; the butterfly is a success, but man a mistake. God made a failure with that animal. A crowd is a choice of uglinesses : the first comer is a scoundrel, and woman rhymes with human ; yes, I have the spleen, complicated with melancholy, home-sickness, and a dash of hypochondria, and I rage, and I yawn, and I am killing myself, and I feel horribly dull."

"Silence, Big R," Bossuet remarked again, who was discussing a legal point with some chums, and was sunk to his waist in a sentence of judicial slang, of which the following is the end.

"For my part, although I am scarce an authority, and at the most an amateur lawyer, I assert this, that : according to the terms of the customs of Normandy, upon the Michaelmas day and in every year an equivalent must be paid to the Lord of the Manor, by all and singular, both by landowners and tenants, and that for every freehold, copyhold, allodium, mortgage—"

"Echo, plaintive nymph!" Grantaire hummed. Close to Grantaire, at an almost silent table, a quire of paper, an ink-stand, and a pen between two small glasses announced that a farce was being sketched out. This great affair was discussed in a low voice, and the heads of the workers almost touched.

"Let us begin with the names, for when you have the names you have the plot."

"That is true : dictate, and I will write."

"Monsieur Dorimon?"

"An annuitant?"

"Of course. His daughter Celestine."

"—Tine. Who next?"

"Colonel Sainval."

"Sainval is worn out. Say Valsin."

By the side of these theatrical aspirants another group, which also took advantage of the noise to talk low, were discussing a duel. An old student of thirty was advising a young man of eighteen, and explaining with what sort of adversary he had to deal.

"Hang it! you will have to be careful, for he is a splendid swordsman. He can attack, makes no useless feints, has a strong wrist, brilliancy, and mathematical parries. And then he is left-handed."

In the corner opposite to Grantaire, Joly and Bahorel were playing at dominoes and talking of love affairs.

"You are happy," said Joly, "you have a mistress who is always laughing."

"It is a fault she commits," Bahorel answered ; "a man's mistress does wrong to laugh, for it encourages him to deceive

her, for seeing her gay saves you from remorse. If you see her sad you have scruples of conscience."

"Ungrateful man! a woman who laughs is so nice, and you never quarrel."

"That results from the treaty we made; on forming our little holy alliance, we gave each other a frontier which we never step beyond. Hence comes peace."

"Peace is digesting happiness."

"And you, Jolly, how does your quarrel stand with Mamselle—you know whom I mean?"

"Oh, she still sulks with a cruel patience."

"And yet you are a lover of most touching thinness."

"Alas!"

"In your place, I would leave her."

"It's easy to say that."

"And to do. Is not her name Musichetta?"

"Yes, ah! my dear Baborel, she is a superb girl, very literary, with little hands and feet, dresses with taste, is white and plump, and has eyes like a gipsy fortune-teller. I am wild about her."

In the third corner a poetical discussion was going on, and Pagan Mythology was quarrelling with Christian Mythology. The point was Olympus, whose defence Jean Prouvaire undertook through his romantic nature. Jean Prouvaire was only timid when in repose; once excited, he broke out in a species of gaiety, accentuated his enthusiasm, and he was at once laughing and lyrical.

"Let us not insult the gods," he said, "for perhaps they have not all departed, and Jupiter does not produce the effect of a dead man upon me. The gods are dreams, you say; well, even in nature such as it is at the present day, and after the flight of these dreams, we find again all the old Pagan myths. A mountain with the profile of a citadel, like the Vignemale, for instance, is still for me the headdress of Cybele. It has not yet been proved to me that Pan does not come at night to whistle in the hollow trunks of the willows, while stopping their holes with his fingers in turn, and I have ever believed that he had some connection with the cascade of Pissevache."

In the last corner politics were being discussed, and the Conceded Charter was pulled to pieces. Combeferre supported it feebly, while Courfeyrac attacked it energetically. There was on the table an unlucky copy of the Charte Touquet. Courfeyrac had seized it and was shaking it, mixing with his argument the rustling of this sheet of paper.

"In the first place. I do not want kings; even from the

economic point of view alone I do not want them, for a king is a parasite, and there are no gratis monarchs. Listen to this, kings are an expensive luxury. On the death of Francis I. the public debt of France was thirty thousand livres, on the death of Louis XIV. it was two milliards six hundred millions, at twenty-eight livres the marc, which in 1740 was equivalent, according to Desmarests, to four milliards five hundred millions, and at the present day would be equal to twelve milliards. In the second place, no offence to Combeferre, a conceded charter is a bad expedient of civilization, for saving the transaction, softening the passage, deadening the shock, making the nation pass insensibly from monarchy to democracy by the practise of constitutional fictions—all these are detestable fictions. No, no, let us never give the people a false light, and principles pine and grow pale in your constitutional cellar. No bastardizing, no compromise, no concession, from a king to people! In all these concessions there is an Article XIV., and by the side of the hand that gives is the claw that takes back again. I distinctly refuse your charter, for a charter is a mask, and there is falsehood behind it. A people that accepts a charter abdicates, and right is only right when entire. No charter then, I say."

It was winter time, and two logs were crackling on the hearth; this was tempting, and Courfeyrac did not resist. He crumpled up the poor Charte Touquet and threw it in the fire,—the paper blazed, and Combeferre philosophically watched the masterpiece of Louis XVIII. burning, contenting himself with saying, "The charter metamorphosed into flame."

And sarcasms, sallies, jots, that French thing which is called *entrain*, that English thing which is called humour, good taste and bad, sound and unsound reasoning, all the rockets of dialogue, ascending together and crossing each other in all parts of the room, produced above their heads a species of merry explosion.

CHAPTER XLII.

ENLARGEMENT OF THE HORIZON.

THE collision of young minds has this admirable thing about it, that the spark can never be foreseen or the lightning divined. What will shoot forth presently? no one knows. The burst of laughter is heard, and at the next moment seriousness makes its

entrance. A stern thought, which strangely issued from a clash of words, suddenly flashed through the medley in which Grantaire, Bahorel, Prouvaire, Bossuet, Combeferre, and Courfeyrac were blindly slashing and pointing. How is it that a phrase suddenly springs up in conversation, and underlines itself at once in the attention of those who trace it? as we have just said, no one knows. In the midst of the general confusion Bossuet concluded some remark he made to Combeferre with the date, "June 18, 1815, Waterloo."

At this name of Waterloo, Marius, who had been leaning over a glass of water, removed his hand from under his chin, and began looking intently at the company.

"Pardieu!" Courfeyrac exclaimed (*Parbleu* at this period was beginning to grow out of fashion). "That number eighteen is strange, and strikes me, for it is Bonaparte's fatal number. Place Louis before and Brumaire behind, and you have the man's whole destiny, with this expressive peculiarity, that the beginning has its heel gybed by the end."

Enjolras, who had hitherto been dumb, now broke the silence, and said,—

"Courfeyrac, you mean that the crime is urged by the expiation."

This word *crime* exceeded the measure which Marius, who was already greatly affected by this sudden reference to Waterloo, could accept. He rose, walked slowly to the map of France hanging on the wall, on the bottom of which could be seen an island in a separate compartment; he placed his finger on this and said,—

"Corsica, a small island, which made France very great."

This was the breath of frozen air; all broke off, for they felt that something was about to begin. Bahorel, who was assuming a victorious attitude in answering Bossuet, gave it up in order to listen; and Enjolras, whose blue eye was fixed on no one and seemed to be examining space, answered without looking at Marius,—

"France requires no Corsica to be great. France is great because she is France, *quia nominor leo*."

Marius felt no desire to give way; he turned to Enjolras, and his voice had a strange vibration, produced by his internal emotion.

"Heaven forbid that I should diminish France; but it is not diminishing her to amalgamate Napoleon with her. Come, let us talk, I am a new-comer among you, but I confess that you astonish me. Where are we? who are we? who are you? who am I? Let us come to an understanding about the Emperor. I hear you call him Buonaparte, laying a stress

on the *u*, like the Royalists, but I must tell you that my grandfather does better still, for he says, 'Buonaparté.' I fancied you young men, but where do you keep your enthusiasm, and what do you do with it? whom do you admire, if it is not the Emperor? and what more do you want? if you will not have that great man, what great man would you have? He had everything, he was complete, and in his brain was the cube of human faculties. He made codes like Justinian, and dictated like Cæsar; his conversation blended the lightning of Pascal with the thunder of Tacitus; he made history and wrote it, and his bulletins are Iliads; he combined the figures of Newton with the metaphor of Mahomet. He left behind him in the East words great as the Pyramids, at Tilsit he taught majesty to Emperors, at the Academy of Sciences he answered Laplace, at the Council of State he held his own against Merlin, he gave a soul to the geometry of one and to the sophistry of others, for he was a legist with the lawyers, a sidereal with the astronomers. Like Cromwell, blowing out one of two candles, he went to the Temple to bargain for a curtain tassel; he saw everything, knew everything, but that did not prevent him from laughing heartily by the cradle of his new-born son. And, all at once, startled Europe listened, armies set out, parks of artillery rolled along, bridges of boats were thrown over rivers, clouds of cavalry galloped in the hurricane, and shouts, bugles, and the crashing of thrones could be heard all around. The frontiers of kingdoms oscillated on the map, the sound of a super-human sword being drawn from its scabbard could be heard, and he was seen, standing erect on the horizon, with a gleam in his hand, and a splendour in his eyes, opening in the thunder his two wings, the grand army and the old Guard. He was the archangel of war."

All were silent, and Enjolras hung his head. Silence always produces to some extent the effect of acquiescence, or a species of setting the back against the wall. Marius, almost without drawing breath, continued with increased enthusiasm,—

"Let us be just, my friends! What a splendid destiny it is for a people to be the empire of such an Emperor, when that people is France and adds its genius to the genius of that man! To appear and reign; to march and triumph; to have as bivouacs every capital; to select grenadiers and make kings of them; to decree the downfall of dynasties; to transfigure Europe at double quick step; to feel when you threaten that you lay your hand on the sword-hilt of God; to follow in one man Hannibal, Cæsar and Charlemagne; to be the people of a ruler

who accompanies your every day-break with the brilliant announcement of a battle gained; to be aroused in the morning by the guns of the Invalides; to cast into the abysses of light prodigious words which are eternally luminous—Marengo, Arcola, Austerlitz, Jena, and Wagram!—to produce at each moment on the zenith of centuries constellations of victories; to make the French Emperor a pendant of the Roman Empire; to be the great nation, and give birth to the great army; to send legions all over the world, as the mountain sends its eagles in all directions to conquer, rule, and crush; to be in Europe a people gilt by glory; to sound a Titanic flourish of trumpets through history; to conquer the world twice, by conquest and by amazement—all this is sublime, and what is there greater?"

"To be free," said Combeferre.

Marius in his turn hung his head. This simple and cold remark had traversed his epical effusion like a steel blade, and he felt it fainting away within him. When he raised his eyes, Combeferre was no longer present; probably satisfied with his reply to the apotheosis, he had left the room, and all, excepting Enjolras, had followed him. Enjolras, alone with Marius, was looking at him gravely. Marius, however, having slightly collected his ideas, did not confess himself defeated, and he was in all probability about to begin afresh upon Enjolras, when he suddenly heard some one singing on the staircase. It was Combeferre, and this is what he sung.

"Si César m'avait donné
La gloire et la guerre,
Et qu'il me fallût quitter
L'amour de ma mère,
Je dirais au grand César :
Reprends ton sceptre et ton char,
J'aime mieux ma mère, ô gué!
J'aime mieux ma mère!"

The tender and solemn accent with which Combeferre sang this couplet imparted to it a species of strange grandeur. Marius, with his eye pensively fixed on the ceiling, repeated almost mechanically "my mother?"

At this moment he felt Enjolras' hand on his shoulder.

"Citizen," he said to him, "my mother is the Republic."

CHAPTER XLII.

RES ANGSTA.

THIS evening left a sad obscurity and a profound shock in the mind of Marius, and he felt what the earth probably feels when it is opened by the plough-share, that the grain may be deposited; it only feels the wound, and the joy of giving birth does not arrive till later.

Marius was gloomy; he had only just made himself a faith, and must he reject it again? He declared to himself that he would not: he resolved not to doubt, and began doubting involuntarily. To stand between two religions, one of which you have not yet lost, and the other which you have not yet entered, is unendurable, and twilight only pleases bat-like souls. Marius had an open eye-ball and wanted true light; and the semi-lustre of doubt hurt him. Whatever might be his desire to remain where he was and cling to it, he was invincibly constrained to continue, to advance, to think, to go further. Whither would this lead him? He feared lest, after taking so many steps which had drawn him near his father, he was now going to take steps which would carry him away from him. His discomfort increased with all the reflections that occurred to him, and an escarpment became formed around him. He agreed neither with his grandfather nor his friends; he was daring for the one and behind-hand for the others; and he found himself doubly isolated, on the side of old age and on the side of youth. He left off going to the Café Musain.

In the troubled state of his conscience he did not think at all of certain serious sides of existence, but the realities of life will not allow themselves to be forgotten, and so they suddenly came to jog his memory. One morning the landlord came into Marius's room, and said to him,—

“Monsieur Courfeyrac recommended you?”

“Yes.”

“But I want my money.”

“Ask Courfeyrac to come and speak to me,” said Marius.

When Courfeyrac arrived the landlord left them, and Marius told his friend what he had not dreamed of telling him yet,—that he was, so to speak, alone in the world, and had no relations.

“What will become of you?” said Courfeyrac.

"I do not know," Marius answered.

"What do you intend doing?"

"I do not know."

"Have you any money?"

"Fifteen francs."

"Are you willing to borrow from me?"

"Never."

"Have you clothes?"

"There they are."

"Any jewelry?"

"A gold watch."

"I know a second-hand clothesman who will take your overcoat and a pair of trousers."

"Very good."

"You will only have a pair of trousers, a waistcoat, a hat, and coat left."

"And my boots."

"What? you will not go barefoot? what opulence!"

"That will be enough."

"I know a jeweller who will buy your watch."

"All right."

"No, it is not all right; what will you do after?"

"Anything I can that is honest."

"Do you know English?"

"No."

"Or German?"

"No."

"All the worse."

"Why so?"

"Because a friend of mine, a publisher, is preparing a sort of Encyclopedia, for which you could have translated English or German articles. The pay is bad, but it is possible to live on it."

"I will learn English and German."

"And in the mean while?"

"I will eat my clothes and my watch."

The clothes-dealer was sent for, and gave twenty francs for the coat and trousers; next they went to the jeweller's, who bought the watch for forty-five francs.

"That's not so bad," said Marius to Courfeyrac, on returning to the hotel; "with my fifteen francs that makes eighty."

"And your bill here?" Courfeyrac observed.

"Oh, I forgot that," said Marius.

The landlord presented his bill, which Marius was bound to pay at once; it amounted to seventy francs.

"I have ten francs left," said Marius.

"The deuce," Courfeyrac replied; "you will spend five francs while learning English, and five while learning German. That will be swallowing a language very quickly, or a five-franc piece very slowly."

Aunt Gillenormand, who was not a bad-hearted woman in sad circumstances, discovered her nephew's abode; and one morning, when Marius returned from college, he found a letter from his aunt and the "sixty pistoles," that is to say, six hundred francs in gold, in a sealed-up box. Marius sent the thirty louis back to his aunt with a respectful note, in which he stated that he would be able in future to take care of himself—at that moment he had just three francs left. The aunt did not tell grand-papa of this refusal, through fear of raising his exasperation to the highest pitch; besides, had he not said, "Never mention that blood-drinker's name in my presence." Marius quitted the Hotel of the Porte St Jacques, as he did not wish to run into debt.

CHAPTER XLIII.

MARIUS IS INDIGENT.

LIFE became severe for Marius: eating his clothes and his watch was nothing, but he also went through that indescribable course which is called "champing the bit." This is a horrible thing, which contains days without bread, nights without sleep, evenings without candle, a house without fire, weeks without work, a future without hope, a thread-bare coat, an old hat at which the girls laugh, the door which you find locked at night because you have not paid your rent, the insolence of the porter and the eating-house keeper, the grins of neighbours, humiliations, dignity trampled under foot, disgust, bitterness, and desperation. Marius learnt how all this is devoured, and how it is often the only thing which a man has to eat. At that moment of life when a man requires pride because he requires love, he felt himself derided because he was meanly dressed, and ridiculous because he was poor. At the age when youth swells the heart with an imperial pride, he looked down more than once at his worn-out boots, and knew the unjust shame and burning blushes of wretchedness. It is an admirable and terrible trial, from which the weak come forth infamous

and the strong sublime. It is the crucible into which destiny throws a man whenever it wishes to have a scoundrel or a demi-god.

For man's great actions are performed in minor struggles. There are obstinate and unknown braves who defend themselves inch by inch in the shadows against the fatal invasion of want and turpitude. They are noble and mysterious triumphs which no eye sees, no renown rewards, and no flourish of trumpets salutes. Life, misfortune, isolation, abandonment, and poverty are battle-fields which have their heroes—obscure heroes who are at times greater than illustrious heroes. Firm and exceptional natures are thus created: misery, which is nearly always a step-mother, is at times a mother: denudation brings forth the power of soul and mind: distress is the nurse of pride, and misfortune is an excellent milk for the magnanimous.

There was a time in Marius's life when he swept his own landing, when he bought a halfpenny-worth of Brie cheese of the fruiterer, when he waited till night-fall to go into the baker's and buy a loaf, which he carried stealthily to his garret as if he had stolen it. At times there might have been seen slipping into the butcher's shop at the corner among the gossiping cooks who elbowed him, a young awkward man with books under his arm, who had a timid and furious air, who on entering removed his hat from his dripping forehead, made a deep bow to the astonished butcher's wife, another to the foreman, asked for a mutton-chop, paid three or four pence, wrapped the chop in paper, placed it between two books under his arm, and went away. It was Marius, and on this chop, which he cooked himself, he lived for three days. On the first day he ate the lean, on the second he ate the fat, and on the third he gnawed the bone. Several times did Aunt Gillenormand make tentatives and send him the sixty pistoles, but Marius always returned them, saying that he wanted for nothing.

He was still in mourning for his father when the revolution we have described took place within him, and since then he had not left off black clothes, but the clothes left him. A day arrived when he had no coat, though his trousers would still pass muster. What was he to do? Courfeyrac, to whom he on his side rendered several services, gave him an old coat. For thirty sous Marius had it turned by some porter, and it became a new coat. But it was green, and Marius henceforth did not go out till night-fall, which caused his coat to appear black. As he still wished to be in mourning, he wrapped himself in the night.

Through all this he contrived to pass his examination. He

was supposed to inhabit Courfeyrac's rooms, which were decent, and where a certain number of legal tomes, supported by broken-backed volumes of novels, represented the library prescribed by the regulations. He had his letters addressed to Courfeyrac's lodgings. When Marius was called to the bar he informed his grandfather of the fact in a cold letter, which, however, was full of submission and respect. M. Gillenormand took the letter with a trembling hand, read it, tore it in four parts, and threw them into the basket. Two or three days later, Mlle Gillenormand heard her father, who was alone in his room, talking aloud, which always happened when he was agitated. She listened and heard the old gentleman say, "If you were not an ass, you would know that you cannot be at the same time a Baron and a lawyer."

CHAPTER XLIV.

MARIUS POOR.

It is the same with misery as with everything else,—in the end it becomes possible, it assumes a shape. A man vegetates, that is to say, is developed in a certain poor way, which is, however, sufficient for life. This is the sort of existence which Marius Pontmercy had secured.

He had got out of the narrowest part, and the defile had grown slightly wider before him. By labour, courage, perseverance, and his will, he contrived to earn about seven hundred francs a year by his work. He had taught himself English and German, and, thanks to Courfeyrac, who introduced him to his friend the publisher, he filled the modest post of hack in his office. He wrote prospectuses, translated newspapers, annotated editions, compiled biographies, and one year with the other, his net receipts were seven hundred francs. He lived upon them—how? not badly as we shall show.

Marius occupied at No. 50-52, for the annual rent of thirty francs, a garret without a fire-place, which was called a "cabinet," and only contained the indispensable articles of furniture, and this furniture was his own. He paid three francs a month to the old principal lodger for sweeping out his room, and bringing him every morning a little hot water, a new-laid egg, and a halfpenny roll. On this roll and egg he

breakfasted, and the outlay varied from a penny to two pence, according as eggs were dear or cheap. At six in the evening, he went to the Rue St Jacques to dine at Rousseau's, exactly opposite Basset's, the print-shop at the corner of the Rue des Mathurins. He did not eat soup, but he ordered a plate of meat for six sous, half a plate of vegetables for three sous, and dessert three sous. For three sous he had as much bread as he liked, and for wine, he drank water. On paying at the bar, where Madame Rousseau, at that period a fat and good-looking dame, was majestically enthroned, he gave a sou for the waiter and Madame Rousseau gave him a smile. Then he went away; for sixteen sous he had a smile and a dinner. This Rousseau restaurant, where so few bottles and so many water-jugs were emptied, was rather a sedative than a restorer. It no longer exists, but the master used to have a wonderful nickname,—he was called Rousseau the aquatic.

Thus, with breakfast four sous, dinner sixteen, his food cost him three hundred and sixty-five francs a year. Add thirty francs for rent and the thirty-six francs for the old woman, and a few minor expenses, and for four hundred and fifty francs Marius was boarded, lodged, and served. His clothes cost him a hundred francs, his linen fifty, his washing fifty, but the whole did not exceed six hundred and fifty francs. He had fifty left, and was rich: at times he would lend ten francs to a friend, and Courfeyrac once actually borrowed sixty francs of him. As for firing, as Marius had no chimney, he "simplified" it. Marius always had two complete suits; one old, for every-day wear, and the other new, for occasions, and both were black. He had but three shirts, one on, one in the drawer, and one at the wash, and he renewed them as they became worn out. As they were usually torn, he had a fashion of buttoning up his coat to the chin.

It had taken Marius years to reach this flourishing condition, rude and difficult years, in which he underwent great struggles, but he had not failed to himself a single day. As regarded want, he had suffered everything and he had done everything except run into debt. He gave himself the credit of never having owed a farthing to any one, for to him debt was the beginning of slavery. He said to himself that a creditor is worse than a master; for a master only holds your person, while a creditor holds your dignity and may insult it. Sooner than borrow he did not eat, and he had known many days of fasting. Knowing that unless a man is careful, reduction of fortune may lead to baseness of soul, he jealously watched over his pride: never a remark or action which, under other circum-

stances, he would have regarded as deference, now seemed to him platitudes, and he refrained from them. He ventured nothing, as he did not wish to fall back; he had on his face a stern blush, and he was timid almost to rudeness. In all his trials he felt encouraged, and to some extent supported, by a secret force within him; for the soul helps the body and at times raises it, and is the only bird that upholds its cage.

By the side of his father's name, another name was engraved on Marius's heart, that of Thénardier. Marius, in his grave and enthusiastic nature, enveloped in a species of glory the man to whom he owed his father's life, that intrepid sergeant who saved his colonel among the balls and bullets of Waterloo. He never separated the memory of this man from that of his father, and he associated them in his veneration: it was a species of shrine with two steps, the high altar for the Colonel, the low one for Thénardier. What doubled the tenderness of his gratitude was the thought of the misfortune into which he knew that Thénardier had fallen, and was swallowed up. Marius had learnt at Montfermeil the ruin and bankruptcy of the unfortunate landlord, and since then had made extraordinary efforts to find his trail, and try to reach him in the frightful abyss of misery through which Thénardier had disappeared. Marius went everywhere: he visited Chelles, Bondy, Gournay Nogent, and Lagny; and obstinately continued his search for three years, spending in these explorations the little money he saved. No one was able to give him the slightest information of Thénardier, and it was supposed he had gone to a foreign country. His creditors had sought him too, with less love, but quite as much perseverance, as Marius, and had been unable to lay hands on him. Marius accused and felt angry with himself for not succeeding in his search; it was the only debt the Colonel left him, and he felt bound in honour to pay it. "What," he thought, "when my father lay dying on the battle-field, Thénardier contrived to find him in the midst of the smoke and grape-shot, and carried him off on his shoulders, although he owed him nothing, while I, who owe so much to Thénardier, am unable to come up with him in the shadow where he is dying of want, and in my turn bring him back from death to life. Oh, I will find him!" In fact, Marius would have given one of his arms to find Thénardier, and his last drop of blood to save him from want; and his sweetest and most magnificent dream was to see Thénardier, do him some service, and say to him,—“You do not know me, but I know you: I am here, dispose of me as you please.”

CHAPTER XLV.

MARIUS GROWS.

AT this period Marius was twenty years of age, and he had left his grandfather's house for three. They remained on the same terms, without attempting a reconciliation or trying to meet. What good would it have been to meet?—to come into collision again? Which of them would have got the better? Marius was the bronze vessel, but Father Gillenormand was the iron pot.

We are bound to say that Marius was mistaken as to his grandfather's heart; he imagined that M. Gillenormand had never loved him, and that this sharp, harsh, laughing old gentleman, who cursed, shouted, stormed, and raised his cane, only felt for him at the most that light and severe affection of the Gerontes in the play. Marius was mistaken; there are fathers who do not love their children; but there is not a grandfather who does not adore his grandson. In his heart, as we said, M. Gillenormand idolized Marius: he idolized him, it is true, after his fashion, with an accompaniment of abuse and even of blows, but when the lad had disappeared he felt a black gap in his heart; he insisted upon his name not being mentioned, but regretted that he was so strictly obeyed. At the outset he hoped that this Buonapartist, this Jacobin, this terrorist, this septembrizer would return, but weeks passed, months passed, years passed, and, to the great despair of M. Gillenormand, the drinker of blood did not reappear. "I could not do otherwise, though, than turn him out," the grandfather said; and asked himself, "If it were to be done again, would I do it?" His pride at once answered Yes, but his old head, which he silently shook, sorrowfully answered, No. He had his hours of depression, for he missed Marius, and old men require affection as much as they do the sun to warm them. However strong he might naturally be, the absence of Marius had changed something in him; for no consideration in the world would he have taken a step towards the "little scamp," but he suffered. He lived in greater retirement than ever at the Marais; he was still gay and violent as of yore, but his gaiety had a convulsive harshness, as if it contained grief and passion, and his violence generally terminated with a sort of gentle and sombre depression. He

would say to himself at times,—“ Oh, if he were to come back, what a hearty box of the ears I would give him ! ”

As for the aunt, she thought too little to love much ; to her Marius was only a black and vague profile, and in the end she paid much less attention to him than to the cat or the parrot which she probably had. What added to Father Gillenormand's secret suffering was that he shut it up within himself, and did not allow it to be divined. His chagrin was like one of those newly-invented furnaces which consume their own smoke. At times it happened that officious friends would speak to him about Marius, and ask, “ How is your grandson, and what is he doing ? ” The old bourgeois would answer, with a sigh if he were sad, or with a flip to his frill if he wished to appear gay, “ Baron Pontmercy is shabbily pleading in some county court.”

While the old gentleman regretted, Marius applauded himself. As is the case with all good hearts, misfortune had freed him from bitterness ; he thought of M. Gillenormand gently, but he was resolved never to accept anything from a man *who had been unjust to his father*. This was the mitigated translation of his first indignation. Moreover, he was glad that he had suffered, and was still suffering, for he did so for his father. The hardness of his life satisfied and pleased him, and he said to himself with a sort of joy that *it was the least he could do*, and that it was an expiation ; that, were it not so, he would have been punished, differently and hereafter, for his impious indifference toward his father, and such a father,—that it would not have been just for his father to have all the suffering and he none ; and, besides, what were his toil and want when compared with the Colonel's heroic life ? Lastly, that his only way of approaching his father, and resembling him, was to be valiant against indigence, as he had been brave against the enemy, and that this was doubtless what the Colonel meant by the words, *he will be worthy of it*—words which Marius continued to bear, not on his chest, as the Colonel's letter had disappeared, but in his heart.

And then, again, on the day when his grandfather turned him out, he was only a boy, while now he was a man and felt he was so. Misery, we lay a stress on the fact, had been kind to him, for poverty in youth, when it succeeds, has the magnificent result of turning the whole will to effort, and the whole soul to aspiration. Poverty at once lays bare material life, and renders it hideous ; and hence come indescribable soarings toward the ideal life. The rich young man has a thousand brilliant and coarse amusements,—races, shooting, dogs, tobacco, gambling, good dinners, and so on, which are occupations of the lower

part of the mind at the expense of the higher and more delicate part. The poor young man has to work for his bread, and when he has eaten, he has only reverie left him. He goes to the gratis spectacles which God gives him ; he looks at the sky, space, the stars, the flowers, the children, the humanity in which he is suffering, and the creation in which he radiates. He looks so much at humanity that he sees the soul, and so much at creation, that he sees God. He dreams, and feels himself great ; he dreams again, and feels himself tender. From the egotism of the man who suffers, he passes to the compassion of the man who contemplates, and an admirable feeling is aroused in him—forgetfulness of self, and pity for all. On thinking of the numberless enjoyments which nature offers, gives, and lavishes on open minds, and refuses to closed minds, he, the millionaire of intellect, learns to pity the millionaire of money. Hatred departs from his heart in proportion as brightness enters his mind. Moreover, was he unhappy ? no, for the wretchedness of a young man is never wretched. Take the first lad who passes, however poor he may be, with his health, his strength, his quick step, his sparkling eyes, his blood circulating warmly, his black hair, his ruddy cheeks, his coral lips, his white teeth, and his pure breath—and he will ever be an object of envy to an old Emperor. And then, each morning he goes to earn his livelihood, and while his hands earn bread, his spine gains pride, and his brain, ideas. When his work is ended, he returns to ineffable ecstasy, to contemplation, and joy ; he lives with his feet in affliction, in obstacles, on the pavement, in the brambles, or at times in the mud, but his head is in the light. He is firm, serene, gentle, peaceful, attentive, serious, satisfied with a little, and benevolent, and he blesses God for having given him two riches which rich men often want—labour which makes him free, and thought that renders him worthy.

This is what went on in Marius, and, truth to tell, he inclined almost too much to the side of contemplation. From the day when he felt tolerably certain of a livelihood, he stopped there, thinking it good to be poor, and taking from labour hours which he gave to thought. That is to say, he spent entire days now and then in dreaming, plunged like a visionary into the silent delights of ecstasy. He had thus arranged the problem of his life ; to toil as little as possible at the material task in order to work as much as possible on the impalpable task—in other words, to devote a few hours to real life, and throw the rest into infinity. He did not perceive, as he fancied that he wanted for nothing, that contemplation, thus understood, ended by becoming one of the forms of indolence ; that he had contented

himself with subduing the absolute necessities of life, and that he was resting too soon.

It was evident that for such a generous and energetic nature as his, this could only be a transitional state, and that at the first collision with the inevitable complications of destiny Marius would wake up. In the mean while, though, he was called to the bar, and whatever Father Gillenormand might think, he did not practise, for reverie had turned him away from oratory. It was a bore to flatter attorneys, attend regularly at the palace and seek for briefs. And why should he do so? he saw no reason to change his means of existence; his obscure task was certain, he had but little labour over it, and, as we have explained, he considered his income satisfactory. One of the publishers for whom he worked, M. Magimel, I think, offered to take him into his house, lodge him comfortably, find him regular work, and pay him one thousand five hundred francs a year. To be comfortably lodged and have one thousand five hundred francs a year! doubtless agreeable things, but then, to resign his liberty, to be a hired servant, a sort of literary clerk! In the opinion of Marius, if he accepted, his position would become better and worse; he would gain comfort and lose dignity; he would exchange a complete and fine misfortune for an ugly and ridiculous constraint; it would be something like a blind man who became one-eyed. So he declined the offer.

Marius lived in solitude; through the inclination he had to remain outside everything, and also through the commotion he had undergone, he held aloof from the society presided over by Enjolras. They remained excellent friends, and ready to help each other when the opportunity offered, but nothing more. Marius had two friends, one, young Courfeyrac, the other, old M. Mabœuf, and he inclined to the latter. In the first place, he owed to him the revolution which had taken place in him, and his knowledge and love of his father: "He operated on me for the cataract," he would say. Certainly, this churchwarden had been decisive: but for all that, M. Mabœuf had only been in this affair the calm and impassive agent of Providence. He had enlightened Marius accidentally and unconsciously, just as a candle does which some one brings into a room, but he had been the candle, and not the some one. As for the internal political revolution which had taken place in Marius, M. Mabœuf was entirely incapable of understanding, wishing, or deserving it. As we shall meet M. Mabœuf again, hereafter, a few remarks about him will not be thrown away.

CHAPTER XLVI.

M. MABŒUF.

ON the day when M. Mabœuf said to Marius, "I certainly approve of political opinions," he expressed the real state of his mind. All political opinions were a matter of indifference to him, and he approved of them all without distinction, that they might leave him at peace, just as the Greeks called the Furies, "the lovely, the kind, the exquisite," the Eumenides. M. Mabœuf's political opinion was to love plants passionately, and books even more. He possessed, like everybody else, his termination in *ist*, without which no one could have lived at that day, but he was neither Royalist, Bonapartist, Chartist, Orleanist, nor Anarchist,—he was a botanist.

He did not understand how men could come to hate each other for trifles like the Charter, democracy, legitimacy, monarchy, the republic, &c., when there were in the world all sorts of mosses, grasses, and plants which they could look at, and piles of folios, and even 32mos, whose pages they could turn over. He was very careful not to be useless: his having books did not prevent him reading them, and being a botanist did not prevent him being a gardener. When he knew Colonel Pontmercy, there was this sympathy between them, that the Colonel did for flowers what he did for fruits. M. Mabœuf had succeeded in producing pears as sweet as those of St Germain; it is one of those combinations from which sprang, as it seems, the autumn Mirabelle plum, which is still celebrated, and no less perfumed than the summer one. He attended mass more through gentleness than devotion, and because, while he loved men's faces but hated their noise, he found them at church congregated and silent, and feeling that he must hold some position in the State, he selected that of churchwarden. He had never succeeded in loving any woman so much as a tulip bulb, or any man so much as an Elzevir. He had long passed his sixtieth year, when some one asked him one day, "How is it that you never married?" "I forgot it," he said. When he happened to say—and to whom does it not happen?—"Oh, if I were rich!" it was not when ogling a pretty girl, like Father Gillenormand, but when contemplating a quarto. He lived alone with an old housekeeper; he was rather gouty, and when he slept, his old chalk-stoned fingers formed an arch

in the folds of the sheets. He had written and published a "Flora of the environs of Cauteretz," with coloured plates, a work of some merit, of which he possessed the plates, and sold it himself. People rang at his door in the Rue Mézières two or three times a day to buy a copy; he made a profit of about two thousand francs a year by the book, and that was nearly his whole fortune. Although poor, he had contrived by patience and privations, and with time, to form a valuable collection of all sorts of rare examples. He never went out without a book under his arm, and frequently returned with two. The sole ornaments of his four rooms on the ground-floor, which, with a small garden, formed his lodging, were herbals and engravings by old masters. The sight of a musket or a sabre froze him, and in his life he had never walked up to a cannon, not even at the Invalides. He had a tolerable stomach, a brother a curé, very white hair, no teeth left in his mouth or in his mind, a tremor all over him, a Picard accent, a childish laugh, and the air of an old sheep. With all he had no other friend among the living than an old bookseller at the Porte St Jacques of the name of Royol; and the dream of his life was to naturalize indigo in France.

His maid-servant was also a variety of innocence. The good woman was an old maid, and Sultan, her tom-cat, who might have miauled the Allegri Miserere in the Sixtine Chapel, filled her heart, and sufficed for the amount of passion within her. Not one of her dreams had ever gone so far as a man, and had not got beyond her cat; like him, she had moustaches. Her glory was perfectly white caps, and she spent her time on Sunday, after mass, in counting the linen in her box, and spreading on her bed the gowns which she bought in the piece, and never had made up. She knew how to read, and M. Mabœuf had christened her Mother Plutarch.

M. Mabœuf had taken a fancy to Marius, because the young man, being young and gentle, warmed his old age without startling his timidity. Youth, combined with gentleness, produces on aged people the effect of sun without wind. When Marius was saturated with military glory, gun-powder, marches and counter-marches, and all the prodigious battles in which his father gave and received such mighty sabre cuts, he went to see M. Mabœuf, who talked to him about the hero in his connection with flowers.

About the year 1830 his brother the curé died, and almost immediately after, as when night arrives, the entire horizon became dark for M. Mabœuf. The bankruptcy of a notary despoiled him of ten thousand francs, all he possessed of his brother's

capital and his own, while the revolution of July produced a crisis in the book trade. In times of pressure the first thing which does not sell is a *Flora*, and that of the Environs of Caunteretz stopped dead. Weeks passed without a purchaser. At times M. Mabœuf started at the sound of the house bell, but Mother Plutarch would say to him sadly, "It is the water-carrier, sir." In a word, M. Mabœuf left the Rue Mézières one day, abdicated his office as churchwarden, gave up St Sulpice, sold a portion, not of his books, but of his engravings, for which he cared least, and installed himself in a small house on the Boulevard Montparnasse, where, however, he only remained three months, for two reasons—in the first place, the ground-floor and garden cost three hundred francs, and he did not dare set aside more than two hundred francs for rent; and secondly, as he was close to the Fatou shooting gallery, he heard pistol-shots, which he could not endure. He carried off his *Flora*, his copper-plates, his herbals, port-folios, and books, and settled down near the Salpêtrière, in a sort of hut, in the village of Austerlitz, where he rented for fifty crowns a year three rooms, a garden enclosed by a hedge, and a well. He took advantage of this removal to sell nearly all his furniture. On the day when he entered his new house he was in very good spirits, and drove in with his own hands the nails on which to hang the engravings; he dug in his garden for the rest of the day, and at night, seeing that Mother Plutarch had an anxious look and was thoughtful, he tapped her on the shoulder and said with a smile, "We have the indigo." Only two visitors, the publisher and Marius, were allowed admission to his hut of Austerlitz, a rackets name, by the way, which was most disagreeable to him.

As we have remarked, things of this world permeate very slowly brains absorbed in wisdom, or mania, or, as often happens, in both at once, and their own destiny is remote from them. The result of such concentrations is a passiveness which, were it of a reasoning nature, would resemble philosophy. Men go downwards, pass away, and even are broken up, without exactly noticing, though this always ends with a reawaking, but one of a tardy character. In the mean while, it appears as if they are neutral in the game which is being played between their happiness and misery; they are the stakes, and look on at the game with indifference. It was thus that M. Mabœuf remained rather childish but most profoundly serene, in the obscurity that was enveloping him gradually, and while his hopes were being extinguished in turn. The habits of his mind had the regular movement of a clock, and when he was once

wound up by an illusion, he went for a very long time, even when the illusion had disappeared. A clock does not stop at the precise moment when the key is lost.

M. Mabœuf had innocent pleasures, which cost but little and were unexpected, and the slightest accident supplied him with them. One day Mother Plutarch was reading a novel in the corner of the room; she was reading aloud, for she fancied that she understood better in that way. There are some persons who read very loud, and look as if they were pledging themselves their word of honour about what they are reading. Mother Plutarch read her novel with an energy of this nature, and M. Mabœuf listened to her without hearing. While reading, Mother Plutarch came to the following passage, relating to a bold dragoon and a gushing young lady:

"La belle bouda, et Le Dragon—"

Here she broke off to wipe her spectacles.

"Bouddha and the dragon," M. Mabœuf repeated in a low voice; "yes, that is true; there was a dragon, which lived in a cavern, belched flames, and set fire to the sky. Several stars had already been burnt up by this monster, which had tiger-claws, by the by, when Bouddha went into its den and succeeded in converting the dragon. That is an excellent book you are reading, Mother Plutarch, and there cannot be a finer legend." And M. Mabœuf fell into a delicious reverie.

Marius felt a liking for this candid old man, who saw himself slowly assailed by poverty and yet was not depressed by it. Marius met Courfeyrac and sought M. Mabœuf—very rarely, however—once or twice a month at the most. Marius' delight was to take long walks alone, either on the external boulevards at the Champ de Mars, or in the least frequented walks of the Luxembourg. He often spent half a day in looking at a kitchen garden, the patches of lettuce, the fowls on the dungheap, and the horse turning the mill-wheel. Passers-by looked at him with surprise, and some thought his dress suspicious and his face dangerous, while it was only a poor young man thinking without an object. It was in one of these walks that he discovered the Maison Gorbeau, and the isolation and the cheapness tempting him, he took a room there. He was only known by the name of M. Marius.

Some of his father's old generals and old comrades invited him to come and see them, when they knew him, and Marius did not refuse, for they were opportunities to speak about his father. He called thus from time to time upon Count Pajol, General Bellavesne, and General Frérion at the Invalides.

There was generally music and dancing, and on such evenings Marius put on his best suit; but he never went to such parties except on days when it was freezing tremendously hard, for he could not pay for a vehicle, and he would not go unless his boots were like looking-glasses. He would say at times, though not at all bitterly, "Men are so constituted that in a drawing-room you may have mud everywhere except on your boots. In order to give you a proper reception only one irreproachable thing is expected from you—is it your conscience? no, your boots."

All passions, saving those of the heart, are dissipated in reverie. The political fever of Marius had vanished, and the revolution of 1830 had aided in this, by satisfying and calming him. He had remained the same, except in his passion; he still held the same opinions, but they were softened down. Properly speaking, he no longer had opinions but sympathies; to what party did he belong? to that of humanity. For humanity he selected France; in the nation he chose the people; and in the people, woman, and his pity was mainly given to her. At the present time he preferred an idea to a fact, a poet to a hero, and he admired a book like *Job* even more than an event like *Marengo*; and when after a day of meditation he returned along the boulevard and saw through the trees the illimitable space, the nameless gleams, the abyss, shadow, and mystery, all that was only human seemed to him infinitely little. He believed that he had—and probably he had—reached the truth of life and of human philosophy, and he ended by gazing at nothing but the sky, the only thing which truth can see from the bottom of her well.

This did not prevent him from multiplying plans, combinations, scaffolding, and projects for the future. In this state of reverie, any eye which had seen into Marius's interior would have been dazzled by the purity of his mind. In fact, if our eyes of the flesh were allowed to peer into the consciences of our neighbour, a man could be judged far more surely from what he dreams than from what he thinks. There is a volition in thought, but there is none in a dream, and the latter, which is entirely spontaneous, assumes and retains, even in the gigantic and the ideal, the image of our mind. Nothing issues more directly and more sincerely from the bottom of our soul than our unreflecting and disproportioned aspirations for the splendours of destiny. The true character of every man could be found in these aspirations, far more certainly than in arranged, reasoned, and co-ordinated ideas. Our chimeras are the

things which most resemble ourselves, and each man dreams of the unknown and the impossible according to his nature.

About the middle of the year 1831 the old woman who waited on Marius told him that his neighbours, the wretched Jondrette family, were going to be turned out. Marius, who spent nearly his whole time out of doors, scarce knew that he had neighbours.

"Why are they turned out?" he asked.

"Because they do not pay their rent, and owe two quarters."

"How much is it?"

"Twenty francs," said the old woman.

Marius had thirty francs in reserve in a drawer.

"Here are twenty-five francs," he said to the woman, "pay the rent of the poor people, give them five francs, and do not tell them where the money comes from."

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE SUBSTITUTE.

ACCIDENT decreed that the regiment to which Theodule belonged should be quartered in Paris. This was an opportunity for Aunt Gillenormand to have a second idea; her first one had been to set Theodule watching Marius, and she now plotted to make him succeed him. In the event of the grandfather feeling a vague want for a youthful face in the house—for such rays of dawn are sometimes sweet to ruins—it was expedient to find another Marius. "Well," she thought, "it is only a simple erratum, such as I notice in books, for *Marius* read *Theodule*. A grand-nephew is much the same as a grandson after all, and in default of a barrister you can take a lancer."

One morning when M. Gillenormand was going to read something like the *Quotidienne*, his daughter came in and said in her softest voice, for the interests of her favourite were at stake,—

"Papa, Theodule is coming this morning to pay his respects to you."

"Who's Theodule?"

"Your grand-nephew."

"Ah!" said the old gentleman.

Then he began reading, thought no more of the grand-nephew, who was only some Theodule, and soon became angry, which nearly always happened when he read. The paper he held, a Royalist one, we need hardly say, announced for the morrow, without any amenity, one of the daily events of Paris at that day. "The pupils of the schools of law and medicine were going to assemble in the Pantheon Square—to deliberate." The affair was one of the questions of the moment, the artillery of the national guard, and a conflict between the war minister and the "Citizen Militia," on the subject of guns parked in the court-yard of the Louvre. The students were going to "deliberate" on this, and it did not require much more to render M. Gillenormand furious. He thought of Marius, who was a student, and who would probably go, like the others, "to deliberate at mid-day in the Pantheon Square."

While he was making these painful reflections Lieutenant Theodule came in, dressed in mufti, which was clever, and was discreetly introduced by Mlle Gillenormand. The lancer had reasoned thus, "The old Druid has not sunk all his money in annuities, and so it is worth the while to disguise oneself as a *pékin* now and then." Mlle Gillenormand said aloud to her father,—

"Theodule, your grand-nephew."

And in a whisper to the lieutenant,—

"Assent to everything."

And retired.

The lieutenant, but little accustomed to such venerable meetings, stammered, with some timidity, "Good morning, uncle," and gave a bow which was half a military salute and half a reverence.

"Ah, it's you, very good, sit down," said the ancestor, and after saying this he utterly forgot the lancer. Theodule sat down, and M. Gillenormand got up. He began walking up and down the room, with his hands in his pockets, talking aloud, and feeling with his old irritated fingers the two watches which he wore in his two fobs.

"That heap of scamps! so they are going to meet in the Pantheon Square! *Vertu de ma mie!* little ragamuffins who were at nurse yesterday! if you were to squeeze their noses the milk would run out! And they are going to deliberate to-morrow! Where are we going? where are we going? it is clear that we are going to the abyss, and the *descamisados* have led us to it. The citizen artillery! deliberate about the citizen artillery! go

and chatter in the open air about the squibs of the National Guard! and whom will they meet there? Just let us see to what Jacobinism leads. I will wager whatever you like, a million against a counter, that there will be only liberated convicts and pick-pockets there, for the Republicans and the galley-slaves are like one nose and one handkerchief. Carnot used to say, 'Where do you want me to go, traitor?' and Fouché answer, 'Wherever you like, imbecile!' That is what the Republicans are."

"That is true," said Theodule.

M. Gillenormand half turned his head, saw Theodule, and went on,—

"And then to think that that scamp had the villany to become a Republican! why did you leave my house to become a Republican? Pest! in the first place, the people do not want your republic, for they are sensible, and know very well that there always have been kings, and always will be, and they know, after all, that the people are only the people, and they laugh at your republic, do you hear, Cretin? Is not such a caprice horrible? to fall in love with Père Duchesne, to ogle the guillotine, to sing romances, and play the guitar under the balcony of '93—why, all these young men ought to be spat upon, for they are so stupid! They are all caught, and not one escapes, and they need only inhale the air of the street to go mad. The nineteenth century is poison; the first comer lets his goat's beard grow, believes himself a scoundrel for the truth, and bolts from his old parents, for that is republican, it is romantic; just be good enough to tell me what that word romantic means?—every folly possible. A year ago they went to see *Hernani*. Just let me ask you, *Hernani*! antitheses, abominations, which are not even written in French. And then there are cannon in the court-yard of the Louvre; such is the brigandage of the present age."

"You are right, uncle," said Theodule.

M. Gillenormand continued,—

"Guns in the court-yard of the Museum! what to do? Cannon, what do you want of me? do you wish to fire grape-shot at the Apollo Belvidere? What have serge-cartridges to do with the Venus de Medici? Oh! the young men of the present day are ragamuffins, and this Benjamin Constant is not much. And those who are not villains are gawkies! they do all they can to make themselves ugly,—they dress badly, they are afraid of women, and they have an air of begging round petticoats, which makes the girls laugh; on my word of honour, they look as if ashamed medics of love. They are

deformed, and perfect it by being stupid ; they repeat the jokes of Tiercelin and Potier ; they wear sack-coats, hostlers' waist-coats, trousers of coarse cloth, boots of coarse leather, and their chatter resembles their plumage—their jargon might be employed to sole their boots. And all these silly lads have political opinions, and it ought to be strictly prohibited. They manufacture systems, they remodel society, they demolish the monarchy, upset all laws, put the garret in the place of the cellar, and my porter in the place of the king ; they upset Europe from one end to the other, build up the world again, and their amours consist in looking sheepishly at the legs of the washerwomen as they get into their carts. Ah, Marius ! ah, scoundrel ! to go and vociferate in the public square ! to discuss, debate, and form measures—they call them measures. Great gods ! why, disorder is decreasing and becoming silly. I have seen chaos and I now see a puddle. Scholars deliberating about the National Guard ! why, that could not be seen among the Ojibiways or the Cacodaches ! The savages who go about naked, with their noddles dressed like a racket-bat, and with a club in their paw, are less of brutes than these bachelors, two-penny-halfpenny brats, who dare to decree and order, deliberate and argue ! Why, it is the end of the world ; it is evidently the end of this wretched globe ; it wanted a final shove, and France has given it. Deliberate, my scamps ! These things will happen so long as they go to read the papers under the arcades of the Odeon ; it costs them a halfpenny, and their common sense, and their intelligence, and their heart, and their soul, and their mind. They leave that place, and then bolt from their family. All the newspapers are poison, even the *Drapeau Blanc* ! and Martainville was a Jacobin at heart. Ah, just Heaven ! you can boast of having rendered your grandfather desperate !”

“That is quite plain,” said Theodule.

And taking advantage of the moment, during which M. Gillenormand was recovering breath, the lancer added magisterially,—

“There ought to be no other paper but the *Moniteur*, and no other book but the Army List.”

M. Gillenormand went on,—

“It is just like their Sièyes ! a regicide who became a senator ! for they always end with that. They scar themselves with the citizen, so that they may be called in the long run Monsieur le Comte —, Monsieur le Comte, as long as the arm of the slaughterers of September. The philosopher Sièyes ! I do myself the justice of saying that I never cared

any more for the philosophy of all these philosophers than I did for the spectacles of the grimacers at Tivoli. One day I saw the Senators pass along the Quay Malaquais, in violet velvet cloaks studded with bees, and wearing Henri IV. hats; they were hideous and looked like the apes of the tigers' court. Citizens, I declare to you that your progress is a madness, that your humanity is a dream, that your Revolution is a crime, that your Republic is a monster, that your young Virgin France emerges from a brothel, and I sustain it against you all. No matter whether you are journalists, social economists, lawyers, and greater connoisseurs of liberty, equality, and fraternity, than the cut-throat of the guillotine! I tell you this plainly, my good fellows."

"Parbleu!" the Lieutenant cried, "that is admirably true!"

M. Gillenormand interrupted a gesture which he had begun, turned round, gazed intently at Theodule the lancer between the eyes, and said to him,—

"You are an ass."

CHAPTER XLVIII.

LUX FACTA EST.

MARIUS at this period was a handsome young man of middle height, with very black hair, a lofty and intelligent forehead, open and impassioned nostrils, a sincere and calm air, and something haughty, pensive, and innocent was spread over his whole face. His profile, in which all the lines were rounded without ceasing to be firm, had that Germanic gentleness which entered France through Alsace and Lorraine, and that absence of angles which renders it so easy to recognize the Sicambri among the Romans, and distinguishes the leonine from the aquiline race. He had reached the season of life when the mind of men is composed of depth and simplicity in nearly equal proportions. A serious situation being given, he had all that was necessary to be stupid, but, with one more turn of the screw, he could be sublime. His manner was reserved, cold, polite, and unexpansive; but, as his mouth was beautiful, his lips bright vermilion, and his teeth the whitest in the world, his smile corrected any severity in his counten-

ance. At certain moments, this chaste forehead and voluptuous smile offered a strange contrast.

In the period of his greatest need he remarked that people turned to look at him when he passed, and he hurried away or hid himself, with death in his soul. He thought that they were looking at his shabby clothes and laughing at them; but the fact is, they were looking at his face, and thinking about it. This silent misunderstanding between himself and pretty passers-by had rendered him savage, and he did not select one from the simple reason that he fled from all. He lived thus indefinitely—stupidly, said Courfeyrac, who also added,—“Do not aspire to be venerable, and take one bit of advice, my dear fellow. Do not read so many books, and look at the wenches a little more, for they have some good about them. Oh, Marius! you will grow brutalized if you go on shunning women and blushing.”

On other occasions, Courfeyrac, when he met him, would say, “Good morning, Abbé.” When Courfeyrac had made any remark of this nature, Marius for a whole week would shun women, young and old, more than ever, and Courfeyrac in the bargain. There were, however, in the whole immense creation, two women whom Marius did not shun, or to whom he paid no attention. To tell the truth, he would have been greatly surprised had any one told him that they were women. One was the hairy-faced old woman who swept his room, and induced Courfeyrac to remark,—“Seeing that his servant wears her beard, Marius does not wear his;” the other was a young girl whom he saw very frequently and did not look at. For more than a year Marius had noticed in a deserted walk of the Luxembourg, the one which is bordered by the Parapet de la Pepinière, a man and a very young lady nearly always seated side by side at the most solitary end of the walk, near the Rue de l’Ouest. Whenever that accident, which mingles with the promenades of people whose eye is turned inwards, led Marius to this walk, and that was nearly daily, he met this couple again. The man seemed to be about sixty years of age; he appeared sad and serious, and the whole of his person offered the robust and fatigued appearance of military men who have retired from service. If he had worn a decoration, Marius would have said, “He is an old officer.” He looked kind, but unapproachable, and never fixed his eye on that of another person. He wore blue trousers, a coat of the same colour, and a broad-brimmed hat, all of which were constantly new, a black cravat, and a quaker’s, that is to say, dazzlingly white,

but very coarse shirt. A grisette who passed him one day said, "What a clean old widower." His hair was very white.

The first time that the young lady who accompanied him sat down with him upon the bench, which they seemed to have adopted, she was about thirteen or fourteen, so thin as to be almost ugly, awkward, insignificant, and promising to have perhaps very fine eyes some day; still they were always raised to the old gentleman with a species of displeasing assurance. She wore the garb, at once old and childish, of boarders at a convent,—a badly-cut dress of coarse black merino. They looked like father and mother. Marius examined for two or three days the old man, who was not yet aged, and this little girl, who was not yet a maiden, and then paid no further attention to them. They, on their side, seemed not even to see him, and talked together with a peaceful and careless air. The girl talked incessantly and gaily, the old man spoke but little, and at times he fixed upon her eyes filled with ineffable paternity. Marius had formed the mechanical habit of walking in this alley, and invariably found them there. This is how matters went on:—

Marius generally arrived by the end of the walk furthest from the bench; he walked the whole length, passed them, then turned back to the end by which he had arrived, and began again. He took this walk five or six times nearly every day in the week, but these persons and himself never even exchanged a bow. The man and the girl, though they appeared, and perhaps because they appeared, to shun observation, had naturally aroused to some little extent the attention of some students, who walked from time to time along La Pepinière; the studious after lectures, the others after their game of billiards. Courfeyrac, who belonged to the latter, had watched them for some time, but finding the girl ugly, he got away from them very rapidly, firing at them like Parthian a sobriquet. Being solely struck by the dress of the girl and the old man's hair, he christened the former Mlle Lanoire, and the father Monsieur Leblanc, so that, as no one knew them otherwise, this name adhered to them in the absence of a better one. The students said, "Ah, M. Leblanc is at his bench," and Marius, like the rest, found it convenient to call this strange gentleman M. Leblanc. We will follow their example. Marius saw them nearly daily, at the same hour, during a year; he considered the man agreeable, but the girl rather dull.

In the second year, just at the point of our story which the reader has now reached, it happened that Marius broke off his daily walk in the Luxembourg, without exactly knowing

why, and was nearly six months without setting foot in the garden. One day, however, he returned to it; it was a beautiful summer's day, and Marius was joyous as men are when the weather is fine. He felt as if he had in his heart all the birds' songs that he heard, and all the patches of blue sky, of which he caught a glimpse between the leaves. He went straight to "his" walk, and when he reached the end he noticed the well-known couple seated on the same bench, but when he drew near he found that, while it was the same man, it did not seem to be the same girl. The person he now saw was a tall and lovely creature, possessing the charming outlines of the woman, at the precise moment when they are still combined with the most simple graces of the child—a fugitive and pure moment which can alone be rendered by the two words "fifteen years." He saw admirable auburn hair, tinted with gilt veins, a forehead that seemed made of marble, cheeks that seemed made of a rose-leaf, and of a pale carnation hue, an exquisite mouth, from which a smile issued like a flash, and words like music, and a head which Raffaele would have given to a Virgin, set upon a neck which Goujon would have given to a Venus. And, that nothing might be wanting in this ravishing face, the nose was not beautiful, but pretty, neither straight nor bent, neither Italian nor Greek, it was the Parisian nose, that is to say, something witty, fine, irregular, and pure, which is the despair of painters and the charm of poets.

When Marius passed her he could not see her eyes, which she constantly drooped; he only saw her long lashes, which revealed modesty. This did not prevent the lovely girl from smiling while she listened to the white-haired man who was speaking to her, and nothing could be so ravishing as this fresh smile with the down-cast eyes. At the first moment Marius thought that it was another daughter of the old gentleman's, a sister of the former. But when the invariable habit of his walk brought him again to the bench, and he examined her attentively, he perceived that it was the same girl. In six months the girl had become a maiden, that was all, and nothing is more frequent than this phenomenon. There is a moment in which girls become roses instantly,—yesterday you left them children, to day you find them objects of anxiety. This girl had not only grown, but was idealized; as three days in April suffice to cover some trees with flowers, six months had sufficed to clothe her with beauty—her April had arrived. We sometimes see poor and insignificant persons suddenly wake up,

pass from indigence to opulence, lay out money in all sorts of extravagance, and become brilliant, prodigal, and magnificent. The reason is that they have just received their dividends; and the girl had been paid six months' income.

And then she was no longer the boarding-school Miss, with her plush bonnet, merino dress, thick shoes, and red hands; taste had come to her with beauty, and she was well dressed, with a species of simple, rich, and unaffected elegance. She wore a black brocade dress, a cloak of the same material, and a white crape bonnet; her white gloves displayed the elegance of her hand, which was playing with the ivory handle of a parasol, and her satin boot revealed the smallness of her foot; when you passed her, her whole toilette exhaled a youthful and penetrating perfume. As for the man, he was still the same. The second time that Marius passed, the girl raised her eyelids, and he could see that her eyes were of a deep *cœrulean* blue, but in this veiled azure there was only the glance of a child. She looked at Marius carelessly, as she would have looked at the child playing under the sycamores, or the marble vase that threw a shadow over the bench; and Marius continued his walk, thinking of something else. He passed the bench four or five times, but did not once turn his eyes toward the young lady. On the following days he returned as usual to the Luxembourg; as usual he found the "father and daughter" there, but he paid no further attention to them. He thought no more of the girl now that she was lovely than he had done when she was ugly, and though he always passed very close to the bench on which she was sitting, it was solely the result of habit.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE EFFECT OF SPRING.

ONE day the air was warm, the Luxembourg was inundated with light and shade, the sky was as pure as if the angels had washed it that morning, the sparrows were twittering shrilly in the foliage of the chestnut trees, and Marius opened his whole soul to nature. He was thinking of nothing, he loved and breathed, he passed by the bench, the young lady raised her eyes to him, and their two glances met. What was

there this time in her look? Marius could not have said, —there was nothing and there was everything, it was a strange flash. She let her eyes fall, and he continued his walk. What he had just seen was not the simple and ingenuous eye of a child, but a mysterious gulf, the mouth of which had opened and then suddenly closed again. There is a day on which every maiden looks in this way, and woe to the man on whom her glance falls!

This first glance of a soul which does not yet know itself is like dawn in the heavens; it is the awakening of something radiant and unknown. Nothing could render the mysterious charm of this unexpected flash which suddenly illumines the adorable darkness, and is composed of all the innocence of the present and all the passion of the future. It is a sort of undecided tenderness, which reveals itself accidentally and waits; it is a snare which innocence sets unconsciously, and in which it captures hearts without wishing or knowing it. It is a virgin who looks at you like a woman. It is rare for a profound reverie not to spring up wherever this flame falls; all purity and all candour are blended in this heavenly and fatal beam, which possesses, more than the best-managed ogles of coquettes, the magic power of suddenly causing that dangerous flower, full of perfume and poison, called love, suddenly to expand in the soul.

On returning to his garret in the evening, Marius took a glance at his clothes, and perceived for the first time that he had been guilty of the extraordinary impropriety and stupidity of walking in the Luxembourg in his "every-day dress," that is to say, with a broken-brimmed hat, clumsy boots, black trousers, white at the knees, and a black coat pale at the elbows. The next day, at the accustomed hour, Marius took out of the drawers his new coat, his new trousers, his new hat, and his new boots; he dressed himself in this complete panoply, put on gloves, an extraordinary luxury, and went off to the Luxembourg. On the road he met Courfeyrac, and pretended not to see him. Courfeyrac on reaching home said to his friends,—

"I have just met Marius' new hat and new coat and Marius inside them. He was going, I fancy, to pass some examination, for he looked so stupid."

On reaching the Luxembourg Marius walked round the basin and gazed at the swans; then he stood for a long time contemplating a statue all black with mould, and which had lost one hip. Near the basin was a comfortable bourgeois of about forty, holding by the hand a little boy, and saying to him,—

"Avoid all excesses, my son; keep at an equal distance from despotism and anarchy." Marius listened to this bourgeois, then walked once again round the basin, and at length proceeded toward "his" walk slowly, and as if regretfully. He seemed to be at once forced and prevented from going, but he did not explain this to himself, and fancied he was behaving as he did every day. On turning into the walk he saw M. Leblanc and the young lady at the other end, seated on "their" bench. He buttoned up his coat to the top, pulled it down so that it should make no creases, examined with some complacency the lustre of his trousers, and marched upon the bench. There was attack in this march, and assuredly a desire for conquest, and hence I say that he marched upon this bench, as I would say Hannibal marched on Rome.

Still, all his movements were mechanical, and he had not in any way altered the habitual preoccupation of his mind and labours. He was thinking at this moment that the "*Manuel des Baccalaureats*" was a stupid book, and that it must have been edited by wondrous ignoramuses, who analyzed as masterpieces of the human mind three tragedies of Racine and only one comedy of Molière. He had a shrill whistling in his ear, and while approaching the bench, he pulled down his coat, and his eyes were fixed on the maiden. He fancied that she filled the whole end of the walk with a vague blue light. As he drew nearer his pace gradually decreased. On coming within a certain distance of the bench, though still some distance from the end of the walk, he stopped, and did not know how it was that he turned back. The young lady was scarce able to notice him, and see how well he looked in his new suit. Still he held himself very erect, for fear any one behind might be looking at him.

He reached the opposite end, then returned, and this time approached a little nearer to the bench. He even got within the distance of three trees, but then he felt an impossibility of going further, and hesitated. He fancied he could see the young lady's face turned toward him; however, he made a masculine, violent effort, subdued his hesitation, and continued to advance. A few moments after he passed in front of the bench, upright and firm, but red up to the ears, and not daring to take a glance either to the right or left, and with his hand thrust into his coat like a statesman. At the moment when he passed under the guns of the fort he felt his heart beat violently. She was dressed as on the previous day, and he heard an ineffable voice which must "be her voice." She was talking quietly, and was very beautiful; he felt it, though he did

not attempt to look at her, "and yet," he thought, "she could not fail to have esteem and consideration for me if she knew that I am the real author of the dissertation on Marcos Obregon de La Ronda, which M. François de Neufchateau appropriated, and made a preface to his edition of *Gil Blas*."

He passed the bench, went to the end of the walk which was close by, then turned and again passed the young lady. This time he was very pale, and his feelings were most disagreeable. He went away from the bench and the maiden, and while turning his back, he fancied that she was looking at him, and this made him totter. He did not again attempt to pass the bench; he stopped at about the middle of the walk and then sat down, a most unusual thing for him, taking side glances, and thinking in the innermost depths of his mind that after all it was difficult for a person whose white bonnet and black dress he admired to be absolutely insensible to his showy trousers and new coat. At the end of a quarter of an hour he rose, as if about to walk toward this bench which was surrounded by a glory, but he remained motionless. For the first time in fifteen months he said to himself that the gentleman who sat there daily with his daughter must have noticed him, and probably considered his assiduity strange. For the first time, too, he felt it was rather irreverent to designate this stranger, even in his own thoughts, by the nickname of M. Leblanc.

He remained thus for some minutes with hanging head, making sketches in the sand with the stick he held in his hand. Then he suddenly turned in the direction opposed to the bench and went home. That day he forgot to go to dinner; he noticed the fact at eight in the evening, and, as it was too late to go to the Rue St Jacques, he ate a lump of bread. He did not go to bed till he had brushed and carefully folded up his coat.

CHAPTER L.

MAME BOUGON IS THUNDER-STRUCK.

THE next day, Mame Bougon—it was thus that Courfeyrac called the old portress, principal lodger, and charwoman, of No. 50-52, though her real name was Madame Bourgon, as we

have stated, but that scamp of a Courfeyrac respected nothing—Mame Bougon, to her stupefaction, noticed that Marius again went out in his best coat. He returned to the Luxembourg, but did not go beyond his half-way bench; he sat down there, as on the previous day, regarding from a distance, and seeing distinctly, the white bonnet, the black dress, and, above all, the blue radiance. He did not move or return home till the gates of the Luxembourg were closed. He did not see M. Leblanc and his daughter go away, and hence concluded that they left the garden by the gate in the Rue de l'Ouest. Some weeks after, when reflecting on the subject, he could never remember where he dined that day. On the next day, the third, Mame Bougon received another thunder-stroke; Marius went out in his new coat. "Three days running!" she exclaimed. She tried to follow him, but Marius walked quickly, and with immense strides: it was a hippopotamus attempting to catch up a chamois. She lost him out of sight in two minutes, and went back panting, three parts choked by her asthma, and furious. "What sense is there," she growled, "in putting on one's best coat every day, and making people run like that!"

Marius had gone to the Luxembourg, where M. Leblanc and the young lady were already. Marius approached as near to them as he could, while pretending to read his book, though still a long distance off, and then sat down on his bench, where he spent four hours in watching the sparrows, which he fancied were ridiculing him, hopping about in the walk. A fortnight passed in this way; Marius no longer went to the Luxembourg to walk, but always to sit down at the same spot, without knowing why. He every morning put on his new coat, although he did not show himself, and began again on the morrow. She was, decidedly, marvellously beautiful; the sole remark resembling a criticism that could be made was, that the contradiction between her glance, which was sad, and her smile, which was joyous, gave her face a slightly startled look, which at times caused this gentle face to become strange without ceasing to be charming.

On one of the last days of the second week Marius was as usual seated on his bench, holding in his hand an open book in which he had not turned a page for several months, when he suddenly started—an event was occurring at the end of the walk. M. Leblanc had left their bench, the girl was holding her father's arm, and both were proceeding slowly toward the middle of the walk where Marius was. He shut his book, then opened it again and tried to read, but he trembled, and the

glory came straight toward him. "Oh, heaven!" he thought, "I shall not have the time to throw myself into an attitude." The white-haired man and the girl, however, advanced; it seemed to him as if this endured a century, and was only a second. "What do they want here?" he asked himself. "What! she is going to pass here; her feet will tread this sand, this walk, two paces from me?" He was quite upset, he would have liked to have been very handsome, and have the cross. He heard the soft measured sound of their footsteps approaching him, and he imagined that M. Leblanc was taking a wry glance at him. "Is this gentleman going to speak to me?" he thought. He hung his head, and when he raised it again they were close to him. The girl passed, and in passing looked at him,—looked at him intently, with a thoughtful gentleness which made Marius shudder from head to foot. It seemed to him as if she reproached him for keeping away from her so long, and was saying, "I have come instead." Marius was dazzled by these eye-balls full of beams and abysses. He felt that his brain was on fire. She had come toward him, what joy! and then, she had looked at him. She appeared to him lovelier than she had ever been, lovely with a beauty at once feminine and angelic, a perfect beauty, which would have made Petrarch sing and Dante kneel. He felt as if he were floating in the blue sky, but, at the same time, he was horribly annoyed because he had dust on his boots, and he felt sure that she had looked at his boots too.

He looked after her till she disappeared, and then walked about the garden like a maniac. He probably at times laughed to himself and talked along. He was so thoughtful among the nurse girls that each of them fancied him in love with her. He met Courfeyrac under the arcades of the Pantheon, and said to him, "Come and dine with me." They went to Rousseau's and spent six francs. Marius ate like an ogre, and gave six sous to the waiter. After dinner he said to Courfeyrac, "Have you read the papers? what a fine speech Audry de Puyraveau made!" He was distractedly in love. He then said to Courfeyrac, "Let us go to the theatre,—I'll pay." They went to the Porte St Martin to see Frederick in the "Auberge des Adrets," and Marius was mightily amused. At the same time he became more virtuous than ever. On leaving the theatre he refused to look at the garter of a dress-maker who was striding across a gutter, and Courfeyrac happening to say, "I should like to place that woman in my collection," he almost felt horrified. Courfeyrac invited him to breakfast next morning at the Café Voltaire. He went there, and ate even more than on the previ-

ous day. He was thoughtful and very gay, and seemed to take every opportunity to laugh noisily. A party of students collected round the table and spoke of the absurdities paid for by the State, which are produced from the pulpit of the Sorbonne, and then the conversation turned to the faults and gaps in dictionaries. Marius interrupted the discussion by exclaiming, "And yet it is very agreeable to have the cross."

"That is funny!" Courfeyrac whispered to Jean Prouvaire.

"No, it is serious," the other answered.

It was in truth serious; Marius had reached that startling and charming hour which commences great passions. A look had effected all this. When the mine is loaded, when the fire is ready, nothing is more simple, and a glance is a spark. It was all over; Marius loved a woman, and his destiny was entering the unknown. The glance of a woman resembles certain wheels which are apparently gentle but are formidable: you daily pass by their side with impunity, and without suspecting anything, and the moment arrives when you even forget that the thing is there. You come, you go, you dream, you speak, you laugh, and all in a minute you feel yourself caught, and it is all over with you. The wheel holds you, the glance has caught you; it has caught, no matter where or how, by some part of your thought which dragged after you, or by some inattention on your part. You are lost, and your whole body will be drawn in; a series of mysterious forces seizes you, and you struggle in vain, for human aid is no longer possible. You pass from cog-wheel to cog-wheel, from agony to agony, from torture to torture—you and your mind, your fortune, your future, and your soul; and, according as you are in the power of a wicked creature or of a noble heart, you will issue from this frightful machinery either disfigured by shame or transfigured by passion.

CHAPTER LI.

AN ECLIPSE.

ISOLATION, pride, independence, a taste for nature, the absence of daily and material labour, the soul-struggles of chastity, and his benevolent ecstasy in the presence of creation, had prepared Marius for that possession which is called pas-

sion. His reverence for his father had gradually become a religion, and, like all religions, withdrew into the depths of the soul: something was wanting for the fore-ground, and love came. A whole month passed, during which Marius went daily to the Luxembourg: when the hour arrived nothing could stop him. "He is on duty," Courfeyrac said. Marius lived in rapture, and it is certain that the young lady looked at him. In the end he had grown bolder, and went nearer the bench; still he did not pass in front of it, obeying at once the timid instincts and prudent instincts of lovers. He thought it advisable not to attract the father's attention, and hence arranged his stations behind trees and the pedestals of statues, with profound Machiavellism, so as to be seen as much as possible by the young lady and as little as possible by the old gentleman. At times he would be standing for half an hour motionless in the shadow of some Leonidas or Spartacus, holding in one hand a book, over which his eyes, gently raised, sought the lovely girl, and she, for her part, turned her charming profile toward him with a vague smile. While talking most naturally and quietly with the white-haired man, she fixed upon Marius all the reveries of a virginal and impassioned glance. It is an old and immemorial trick which Eve knew from the first day of the world, and which every woman knows from the first day of her life. Her mouth replied to the one and her eye answered the other.

It must be supposed, however, that M. Leblanc eventually noticed something, for frequently when Marius arrived he got up and began walking. He left their accustomed seat, and adopted at the other end of the walk the bench close to the Gladiator, as if to see whether Marius would follow them. Marius did not understand it, and committed this fault. "The father" began to become unpunctual, and no longer brought his "daughter" every day. At times he came alone, and then Marius did not stop, and this was another fault. Marius paid no attention to these symptoms: from the timid phase he had passed by a natural and fatal progress into a blind phase. His love was growing, and he dreamed of it every night, and then an unexpected happiness occurred to him, like oil on fire, and redoubled the darkness over his eyes. One evening at twilight he found on the bench which "M. Leblanc and his daughter" had just quitted, a simple, unembroidered handkerchief, which, however, was white and pure, and seemed to him to exhale ineffable odours. He seized it with transport, and noticed that it was marked with the letters U. F. Marius knew nothing about the lovely girl, neither her family, her name, nor her abode; these two letters were the first thing of hers which he

seized, adorable initials, upon which he at once begun to erect his scaffolding. U. was evidently the Christian name: "Ursule!" he thought, "what a delicious name!" He kissed the handkerchief, smelt it, placed it on his heart during the day, and at night upon his lips to go to sleep.

"I can see her whole soul!" he exclaimed.

This handkerchief belonged to the old gentleman, who had simply let it fall from his pocket. On the following days, when Marius went to the Luxembourg, he kissed the handkerchief, and pressed it to his heart. The lovely girl did not understand what this meant, and expressed her surprise by imperceptible signs.

"Oh modesty!" said Marius.

Since we have uttered the word *modesty*, and as we conceal nothing, we are bound to say, however, that on one occasion "his Ursule" caused him serious vexation through his ecstasy. It was on one of the days when she induced M. Leblanc to leave the bench and walk about. There was a sharp spring breeze which shook the tops of the plane trees; and father and daughter, arm in arm, had just passed in front of Marius, who rose and watched them, as was fitting for a man in his condition. All at once a puff of wind, more merry than the rest, and probably ordered to do the business of spring, dashed along the walk, enveloped the maiden in a delicious rustling worthy of the nymphs of Virgil and the Fauns of Theocritus, and raised her dress, that dress more sacred than that of Isis, almost as high as her garter. A leg of exquisite shape became visible. Marius saw it, and he was exasperated and furious. The maiden rapidly put down her dress, with a divinely startled movement, but he was not the less indignant. There was no one in the walk, it was true, but there might have been somebody; and if that somebody had been there? Is such a thing conceivable? what she has just done is horrible! Alas! the poor girl had done nothing, and there was only one culprit, the wind, but Marius was determined to be dissatisfied, and was jealous of his shadow; it is thus, in fact, that the bitter and strange jealousy of the flesh is aroused in the human heart, and dominates it, even unjustly. Besides, apart from his jealousy, the sight of this charming leg was not at all agreeable to him, and any other woman's white stocking would have caused him more pleasure.

When "his Ursule," after reaching the end of the walk, turned back with M. Leblanc, and passed in front of the bench on which Marius was sitting, he gave her a stern, savage glance. The girl drew herself slightly up, and raised her eyelids, which

means, "Well, what is the matter now?" This was their first quarrel. Marius had scarce finished upbraiding her in this way with his eyes, when some one crossed the walk. It was a bending invalid, all wrinkled and white, wearing the uniform of Louis XV., having on his coat the little oval patch of red cloth with the crossed swords, the soldier's cross of St Louis, and, in addition, decorated with a coat-sleeve in which there was no arm, a silver chin, and a wooden leg. Marius fancied he could notice that this man had an air of satisfaction; it seemed to him that the old cynic, while hobbling past him, gave him a fraternal and extremely jovial wink, as if some accident had enabled them to enjoy in common some good thing. Why was this relic of Mars so pleased? what had occurred between this wooden leg and the other? Marius attained the paroxysm of jealousy. "He was perhaps there," he said to himself, "perhaps he saw," and he felt inclined to exterminate the invalid.

With the help of time every point grows blunted, and Marius' anger with "Ursule," though so just and legitimate, passed away. He ended by pardoning her, but it was a mighty effort, and he sulked with her for three days. Still, through all this, and owing to all this, his passion increased, and became insane.

We have seen how Marius discovered, or fancied he had discovered, that her name was Ursule. Appetite comes while loving, and to know that her name was Ursule was a great deal already, but it was little. In three or four weeks Marius had devoured this happiness and craved another; he wished to know where she lived. He had made the first fault in falling into the trap of the Gladiator's bench; he had committed a second by not remaining at the Luxembourg when M. Leblanc went there alone; and he now committed a third, an immense one—he followed "Ursule." She lived in the Rue de l'Ouest, in the most isolated part, in a new three-storeyed house of modest appearance. From this moment Marius added to his happiness of seeing her at the Luxembourg the happiness of following her home. His hunger increased; he knew what her name was, her Christian name at least, the charming, the real name of a woman; he knew where she lived, and he now wanted to know who she was. One evening after following them home, and watching them disappear in the gateway, he went in after them, and valiantly addressed the porter.

"Is that the gentleman of the first floor who has just come in?"

"No," the porter answered, "it is the gentleman of the third floor."

Another step made! This success emboldened Marius.

"Front?" he asked.

"Hang it," said the porter, "our rooms all look on the street."

"And what is the gentleman's position?" Marius continued.

"He lives on his property. He is a very good man, who does a deal of good to the wretched, though he is not rich."

"What is his name?" Marius added.

The porter raised his head and said,—

"Do you happen to be a police spy, sir?"

Marius went off much abashed, but highly delighted, for he was progressing.

"Good," he thought, "I know that her name is Ursule, that she is the daughter of a retired gentleman, and that she lives there, on a third floor in the Rue de l'Ouest."

On the morrow M. Leblanc made but a short appearance at the Luxembourg, and went away in broad daylight. Marius followed them to the Rue de l'Ouest, as was his habit, and on reaching the gateway M. Leblanc made his daughter go in first, then stopped, turned, and looked intently at Marius. The next day they did not come to the Luxembourg, and Marius waited in vain the whole day. At nightfall, he went to the Rue de l'Ouest, and noticed a light in the third-floor windows, and he walked about beneath these windows till the light was extinguished. The next day there was no one at the Luxembourg; Marius waited all day, and then went to keep his night-watch under the windows. This took him till ten o'clock, and his dinner became what it could, for fever nourishes the sick man and love the lover. Eight days passed in this way, and M. Leblanc and his daughter did not again appear at the Luxembourg. Marius made sorrowful conjectures, for he did not dare watch the gateway by day; he contented himself with going at night to contemplate the reddish brightness of the window-panes. He saw shadows pass now and then, and his heart beat.

On the eighth day, when he arrived beneath the windows, there was no light. "What," he said to himself, "the lamp is not lighted, can they have gone out?" He waited till ten o'clock, till midnight, till one o'clock, but no light was kindled at the third-floor windows, and nobody entered the house. He went away with very gloomy thoughts. On the morrow—for he only lived from morrow to morrow, and he had no to-day, so to speak—he saw nobody at the Luxembourg, as he expected, and at nightfall he went to the house. There was no light at

the windows, the shutters were closed, and the third floor was all darkness. Marius rapped, walked in, and said to the porter,—

"The gentleman on the third floor?"

"Gone away," the porter answered.

Marius tottered, and asked feebly,—

"Since when?"

"Yesterday."

"Where is he living now?"

"I do not know."

"Then he did not leave his new address?"

"No."

And the porter, raising his nose, recognized Marius.

"What? it's you, is it?" he said; "why, you must really be a spy."

CHAPTER LII.

MINES AND MINERS.

HUMAN societies have ever what is called in theatres "*un troisième dessous*," and the social soil is everywhere undermined, here for good and there for evil. These works are upon one another; there are upper mines and lower mines, and there is a top and bottom in this obscure sub-soil, which at times gives way beneath the weight of civilization, and which our indifference and carelessness trample under foot. The Encyclopedia was in the last century an almost open mine, and the darkness, that gloomy brooder of primitive Christianity, only awaited an occasion to explode beneath the Cæsars and inundate the human race with light. For in the sacred darkness there is latent light, and the volcanoes are full of a shadow which is capable of flashing, and all lava begins by being night. The catacombs in which the first mass was read were not merely the cellar of Rome but also the vault of the world.

There are all sorts of excavations beneath the social building, that marvel complicated by a hovel; there is the religious mine, the philosophic mine, the political mine, the social economic mine, and the revolutionary mine. One man picks with the idea, another with figure, another with auger, and they call to and answer each other from the catacombs. Utopias move in subterranean sewers and ramify in all directions; they meet

there at times and fraternize. Jean Jacques lends his pick to Diogenea, who lends him his lantern in turn; at times, though, they fight, and Calvin clutches Socinus by the hair. But nothing arrests or interrupts the tension of all their energies toward the object, and the vast simultaneous energy, which comes and goes, ascends, descends, and re-ascends, in the obscurity, and which slowly substitutes top for bottom and inside for out; it is an immense and unknown ant-heap. Society hardly suspects this excavation, which leaves no traces on its surface and yet changes its entrails, and there are as many different works and varying extractions as there are subterranean adits. What issues from all these profound pits?—the future.

The deeper we go the more mysterious the mines become. To a certain point which the social philosopher is able to recognize the labour is good; beyond that point it is doubtful and mixed; and lower still it becomes terrible. At a certain depth the excavations can no longer be endured by the spirit of civilization, and man's limit of breathing is passed: a commencement of monsters becomes possible. The descending ladder is strange, and each rung corresponds with a stage upon which philosophy can land, and meet one of these miners, who are sometimes divine, at others deformed. Below John Huss there is Luther; below Luther, Descartes; below Descartes, Voltaire; below Voltaire, Condorcet; below Condorcet, Robespierre; below Robespierre, Marat; and below Marat, Babeuf, and so it goes on. Lower still we notice confusedly, at the limit which separates the indistinct from the invisible, other gloomy men, who perhaps do not yet exist: those of yesterday are spectres, those of the morrow grubs. The mental eye can only distinguish them obscurely, and the embryonic labour of the future is one of the visions of the future. A world in limbo in the foetus stage—what an extraordinary sketch! Saint Simon, Owen, and Fourier are also there in the side-passages.

Assuredly, although a divine and invisible chain connects together without their cognizance all these subterranean miners, who nearly always fancy themselves isolated but are not so, their labours vary greatly, and the light of the one contrasts with the dazzle of the other: some are paradisaic and others tragical. Still, however great the contrast may be, all these labourers, from the highest to the most nocturnal, from the wisest down to the maddest, have a similitude in their disinterestedness: they leave themselves on one side, omit themselves, do not think of themselves, and see something different from themselves. They have a glance, and that glance seeks the absolute; the first has heaven in his eyes, and the last however enigmatical he

may be, has beneath his eyebrow the pale brightness of infinity. Venerate every man, no matter what he may be doing,—any man who has the sign, a starry eyeball. The dark eyeball is the other sign, and with it evil begins. Reflect and tremble in the presence of the man who does not look, for social order has its black miners. There is a point where profundity is burial and where light is extinguished. Below all these mines which we have indicated,—below all these galleries, below all this immense subterranean arterial system of progress and Utopia, far deeper in the ground, below Marat, below Babeuf, much, much lower, there is the last passage, which has no connection with the upper drifts. It is a formidable spot, and what we termed the *troisième dessous*. It is the grave of darkness and the cave of the blind, *Inferi*, and communicates with the abysses.

Here disinterestedness fades away, and the dream is vaguely sketched. Every one for himself. The eyeless I yells, seeks, gropes, and groans : the social Ugolino is in this gulf. The ferocious shadows which prowl about this grave, almost brutes, almost phantoms, do not trouble themselves about human progress; they are ignorant of ideas and language, and thus they care for nought beyond individual gratification. They are almost unconscious, and there is within them a species of frightful obliteration. They have two mothers, both step-mothers, ignorance and wretchedness; they have for their guide want, and for all power of satisfaction appetite; they are brutally voracious, that is to say, ferocious,—not after the fashion of the tyrant, but that of the tiger. From suffering these grubs pass to crime,—it is a fatal affiliation, a ghastly propagation, the logic of darkness; what crawls in the lowest passage is no longer the stifled demand of the absolute, but the protest of matter. Man becomes a dragon then; his starting-point is to be hungry and thirsty, and his terminus is to be Satan: Lacenaire issued from this cave.

We have just seen one of the compartments of the upper mine, the great political, revolutionary, and philosophic sap. There, as we said, all is noble, pure, worthy, and honest: men may be mistaken in it, and are mistaken, but the error must be revered, because it implies so much heroism, and the work performed there has a name—Progress. The moment has now arrived to take a glance at other and hideous depths. There is beneath society, and there ever will be, till the day when ignorance is dissipated, the great cavern of evil. This cavern is below all the rest, and the enemy of all; it is hatred without exception. This cavern knows no philosophers, and its dagger never made a pen, while its blackness bears no relation with the

sublime blackness of the inkstand. The fingers of night, which clench beneath this asphyxiating roof, never opened a book or unfolded a newspaper. Babeuf is to Cartouche a person who takes advantage of his knowledge, and Marat an aristocrat in the sight of Schinderhannes, and the object of this cavern is the overthrow of everything.

Of everything,—including the upper levels which it execrates. It not only undermines in its hideous labour the existing social order, but it undermines philosophy, science, the law, human thought, civilization, revolution, and progress, and it calls itself most simply, robbery, prostitution, murder, and assassination. It is darkness, and desires chaos, and its roof is composed of ignorance. All the other mines above it have only one object, to suppress it; and philosophy and progress strive for this with all their organs simultaneously, by the amelioration of the real, as well as the contemplation of the ideal. Destroy the cave, Ignorance, and you destroy the mole, Crime. Let us condense in a few words a portion of what we have just written. The sole social evil is darkness; humanity is identity, for all men are of the same clay, and in this nether world, at least, there is no difference in predestination; we are the same shadow before, the same flesh during, and the same ashes afterwards: but ignorance, mixed with the human paste, blackens it, and this incurable blackness enters man and becomes Evil there.

CHAPTER LIII.

BABET, GUEULEMER, CLAQUESOUS, AND MONTFARNASSE.

A QUARTETTE of bandits, Babet, Gueulemer, Claquesous, and Montfarnasse, governed, from 1830 to 1835, the lowest depths of Paris. Gueulemer was a Hercules out of place, and his den was the Arche-Marion sewer. He was six feet high, had lungs of marble, muscles of bronze, the respiration of a cavern, the bust of a colossus, and a bird's skull. You fancied you saw the Farnèse Hercules, attired in ticking trousers and a cotton velvet jacket. Gueulemer built in this mould might have subdued monsters, but he had found it shorter to be one. A low forehead, wide temples, under forty years of age, rough short hair, and a bushy beard; you can see the man. His muscles demanded work, and his stupidity would not accept it: he

was a great slothful strength, and an assassin through nonchalance. People believed him to be a Creole, and he had probably laid his hands upon Marshal Brune when massacred, as he was a porter at Avignon in 1815. From that stage he had become a bandit.

Babet's transparency contrasted with the meat of Gueulemer; he was thin and learned,—transparent but impenetrable: you might see the light through his bones, but not through his eyes. He called himself a chemist, and had played in the vaudeville at St Mihiel. He was a man of intentions, and a fine speaker, who underlined his smiles and placed his gestures between inverted commas. His trade was to sell in the open air plaster busts and portraits of the "chief of the State," and, in addition, he pulled teeth out. He had shown phenomena at fairs, and possessed a booth with a trumpet and the following show-board,—“Babet, dentist, and member of the academies, performs physical experiments on metals and metalloids, extirpates teeth, and undertakes stumps given up by the profession. Terms,—one tooth, one franc fifty centimes; two teeth, two francs; three teeth, two francs fifty centimes. Take advantage of the opportunity.” (The last sentence meant, Have as many teeth pulled out as possible.) He was married and had children, but did not know what had become of wife or children: he had lost them, just as another man loses his handkerchief. Babet was a high exception in the obscure world to which he belonged, for he read the newspapers. One day, at the time when he still had his family with him in his caravan, he read in the *Moniteur* that a woman had just been delivered of a child with a calf's snout, and exclaimed, “There's a fortune! my wife would not have the sense to produce me a child like that!” Since then he had given up everything to “undertake Paris:” the expression is his own.

What was Claquesous? he was night; and never showed himself till the sky was bedaubed with blackness. In the evening he emerged from a hole, to which he returned before day-break. Where was this hole? no one knew. In the greatest darkness, and when alone with his accomplices, he turned his back when he spoke to them. Was his name Claquesous? no: he said, “My name is Not-at-all.” If a candle were brought in he put on a mask, and he was a ventriloquist in the bargain, and Babet used to say, “Claquesous is a night-bird with two voices.” Claquesous was vague, wandering, and terrible: no one was sure that he had a name, for Claquesous was a nickname: no one was sure that he had a voice, for his stomach spoke

more frequently than his mouth; and no one was sure that he had a face, as nothing had ever been seen but his mask. He disappeared like a ghost, and when he appeared he seemed to issue from the ground.

Montparnasse was a mournful being. He was a lad not yet twenty, with a pretty face, lips that resembled cherries, beautiful black hair, and the brightness of spring in his eyes: he had every vice, and aspired to every crime, and the digestion of evil gave him an appetite for worse. He was the gamin turned pickpocket, and the pickpocket had become a garrotter. He was genteel, effeminate, graceful, robust, active, and ferocious. The left-hand brim of his hat was turned up to make room for the tuft of hair, in the style of 1829. He lived by robbery committed with violence, and his coat was cut in the latest fashion, though worn at the seams. Montparnasse was an engraving of the fashions, in a state of want, and committing murders. The cause of all the attacks made by this young man was a longing to be well dressed: the first grisette who said to him, "You are handsome," put the black spot in his heart, and made a Cain of this Abel. Finding himself good-looking, he wished to be elegant, and the first stage of elegance is idleness: but the idleness of the poor man is crime. Few garroters were so grand as Montparnasse, and at the age of eighteen he had several corpses behind him. More than one wayfarer lay in the shadow of this villain with outstretched arms, and with his face in a pool of blood. Curled, pommaded, with his waist pinched in, the hips of a woman, the bust of a Prussian officer, the buzz of admiration of the girls of the boulevard around him, a carefully-tied cravat, a life-preserver in his pocket, and a flower in his button-hole—such was this dandy of the tomb.

These four bandits formed a species of Proteus, winding through the police ranks and striving to escape the indiscreet glances of Vidocq "under various faces, trees, flame, and fountain," borrowing each others' names and tricks, asylums for one another, laying aside their personality as a man removes a false nose at a masquerade; at times simplifying themselves so as to be only one man, at others multiplying themselves to such an extent that Coco-Latour himself took them for a mob. These four men were not four men; they were a species of four-headed robber working Paris on a grand scale; the monstrous polype of evil inhabiting the crypt of society. Owing to their ramifications and the subjacent net-work of their relations, Babet, Gueulemer, Claquesous, and Montparnasse had the general direction of all the villainies in the department of

the Seine, and carried out upon the passer-by the low-class of coups d'état. The finders of ideas in this style, the men with nocturnal imaginations, applied to them to execute them; the four villains were supplied with the canvas, and they produced the scenery. They were always in a position to supply a proportionate and proper staff for every robbery which was sufficiently lucrative and required a stout arm. If a crime were in want of persons to carry it out, they sub-let the accomplices, and they always had a band of actors at the service of all the tragedies of the caverns.

They generally met at night-fall, the hour when they awoke, on the steppes that border the Salpêtrière. There they conferred, and, as they had the twelve dark hours before them, they settled their employment. *Patron Minette* was the name given in the subterranean lurking-places to the association of these four men. In the old and fantastic popular language, which is daily dying out, *Patron Minette* signifies the morning, just as "between dog and wolf" signifies night. This appellation was probably derived from the hour when their work finished, for dawn is the moment for spectres to fade away and for bandits to part. These four men were known by this title. When the President of the Assizes visited Lacenaire in prison, he questioned him about a crime which the murderer denied. "Who committed it?" the President asked, and Lacenaire gave this answer, which was enigmatical for the magistrate, but clear for the police, "It is, perhaps, *Patron Minette*."

The plot of a play may be at times divined from the list of names, and a party of bandits may, perhaps, be appreciated in the same way. Here are the names to which the principal members of *Patron Minette* answered, exactly as they survive in special memoirs.

Panchaud called Spring, *alias* Bigrenaille, Brujon (there was a dynasty of Brujons, about whom we may still say a word): Boulatruelle, the road-mender, of whom we have caught a glimpse; Laveuve; Finistère; Homer-Hogu, a negro; Tuesday night; Make haste; Fauntleroy *alias*, Flower-girl; Glorious, a liberated convict; Stop the coach, *alias* Monsieur Dupont; The Southern Esplanade; Poussàgrive; Carmagnolet; Kruideniers, *alias* Bizarro; Lace-eater; Feet in the air; Half farthing, *alias* Two Millions, &c. &c.

These names have faces, and express not merely beings but species. Each of these names responds to a variety of the poisonous fungi which grow beneath human civilization. These beings, very careful about showing their faces, were not of those whom we may see passing by day, for at that period, weary of

their night wanderings, they went to sleep in the lime-kilns, the deserted quarries of Montmartre or Montrouge, or even in the snow. They ran to earth.

What has become of these men? they still exist, and have ever existed. Horace alludes to them in his *Ambubaiarum collegia*, *pharmacopolæ*, *mendici*, *mimi*, and so as long as society is what it is they will be what they are. Under the obscure vault of their cellar they are even born again from the social leakage, they return as spectres, but ever identical; the only difference is that they no longer bear the same names, and are no longer in the same skins; though the individuals are extirpated, the tribe exists. They have always the same qualities, and from mumper to prowler, the race ever remains pure. They guess purses in pockets and scent watches in fobs; and gold and silver have a peculiar smell for them. There are simple cits of whom we might say that they have a robbable look, and these men patiently follow these cits. When a foreigner or a countryman passes they quiver like the spider in its web.

These men, when we catch a glimpse of them upon a deserted boulevard at midnight, are frightful; they do not seem to be men, but forms made of living fog; we might say that they are habitually a portion of the darkness, that they are not distinct, that they have no other soul but shadow, and that they have become detached from night momentarily, and in order to live a monstrous life for a few moments. What is required to make these phantoms vanish? light, floods of light. Not a single bat can resist the dawn, so light up the lower strata of society.

CHAPTER LIV.

A MAN'S CAP INSTEAD OF A GIRL'S BONNET.

SUMMER passed away, then autumn and winter arrived. Neither M. Leblanc nor the young lady had set foot again in the Luxembourg, while Marius had but one thought, that of seeing again this sweet and adorable face. He sought it ever, he sought it everywhere, but found nothing. He was no longer Marius, the enthusiastic dreamer, the resolute, ardent, and firm man, the bold challenger of destiny, the brain that built up future upon future, the young mind encumbered with plans, projects, pride, ideas, and resolves,—he was a lost dog.

He fell into a dark sorrow, and it was all over with him; work was repulsive, walking fatigued him, and solitude wearied him. Mighty nature, once so full of forms, brightness, voices, counsel, perspectives, horizons, and instruction, was now a vacuum before him; and he felt as if everything had disappeared. He still thought, for he could not do otherwise, but no longer took pleasure in his thoughts. To all that they incessantly proposed to him in whispers, he answered in the shadow, What use is it? He made himself a hundred reproaches. "Why did I follow her? I was so happy merely in seeing her! She looked at me, and was not that immense? She looked as if she loved me, and was not that everything? I wanted to have what? there is nothing beyond that, and I was absurd. It is my fault," &c. &c. Courfeyrac, to whom he confided nothing, as was his nature, but who guessed pretty nearly all, for that was his nature too, had begun by congratulating him on being in love, and made sundry bad jokes about it. Then, on seeing Marius in this melancholy state, he ended by saying to him, "I see that you have simply been an animal; come to the *Chaumière*."

Once, putting confidence in a splendid September sun, Marius allowed himself to be taken to the ball of Sceaux by Courfeyrac, Bossuet, and Grantaire, hoping—what a dream!—that he might find her there. Of course he did not see the lady whom he sought—"and yet this is the place where all the lost women can be found," Grantaire growled aside. Marius left his friends at the ball, and returned a-foot, alone, tired, feverish, with eyes troubled and sad, in the night, stunned with noise and dust by the many vehicles full of singing beings who were returning from the holiday, and who passed him. He was discouraged, and in order to relieve his aching head, inhaled the sharp smell of the walnut trees on the road-side. He began living again more than ever in solitude, crushed, giving way to his internal agony, walking up and down like a wolf caught in a trap, everywhere seeking the absent one, and brutalized by love.

Another time he had a meeting which produced a strange effect upon him. In the little streets adjoining the Boulevard des Invalides he passed a man dressed like a workman, and wearing a deep-peaked cap, under which white locks peered out. Marius was struck by the beauty of this white hair, and looked at the man, who was walking slowly, and as if absorbed in painful meditation. Strange to say, he fancied that he could recognize M. Leblanc,—it was the same hair, the same profile, as far as the peak allowed him to see, and the same gait, though

somewhat more melancholy. But why this workman's clothing? What was the meaning of this disguise? Marius was greatly surprised, and when he came to himself again his first impulse was to follow this man, for he might, perhaps, hold the clue which he had so long been seeking; at any rate, he must have a close look at the man, and clear up the enigma; but he hit on this idea too late, for the man was no longer there. He had turned into some side street, and Marius was unable to find him again. This meeting troubled him for some days, and then faded away. "After all," he said to himself, "it is probably only a resemblance."

CHAPTER LV.

MARIUS FINDS SOMETHING.

MARIUS still lived at No. 50-52, but he paid no attention to his fellow-lodgers. At this period, in truth, there were no other tenants in the house but himself and those Jondrettes whose rent he had once paid, without ever having spoken to father, mother, or daughters. The other lodgers had removed, were dead, or turned out for not paying their rent. On one day of this winter the sun had shown itself a little during the afternoon, but it was Feb. 2, that old Candlemas day, whose treacherous sun, the precursor of a six weeks' frost, inspired Matthew Laensberg with these two lines, which have justly become classical,—

"Qu'il luise ou qu'il luiserne
L'ours rentre à sa caverne."

Marius had just left his cavern, for night was falling. It was the hour to go and dine, for he had been obliged to revert to that practice, such is the infirmity of ideal passions. He had just crossed the threshold of his door, which Mame Bougon was sweeping at this very moment, while uttering the memorable soliloquy,—

"What is there cheap at present? everything is dear. There is only trouble which is cheap, and it may be had for nothing."

Marius slowly walked along the boulevard, in the direction of the Rue St Jacques. He walked thoughtfully with hanging

head. All at once he felt himself elbowed in the fog. He turned and saw two girls in rags, one tall and thin, the other not quite so tall, who passed hurriedly, panting, frightened, and as if running away; they were coming toward him, and ran against him as they passed. Marius noticed in the twilight their livid faces, uncovered heads, dishevelled hair, their ragged petticoats, and bare feeting. While running they talked together, and the elder said,—

“The slops came, and nearly caught me.”

And the other answered, “I saw them, and so I bolted, bolted, bolted.”

Marius understood that the police had nearly caught the two girls, and that they had managed to escape. They buried themselves beneath the trees behind him, and for a few minutes produced a sort of vague whiteness in the obscurity. Marius had stopped for a moment, and was just going on, when he noticed a small grey packet lying at his feet. He stooped down and picked it up; it was a sort of envelope, apparently containing papers.

“Why,” he said, “these poor girls must have let it fall.”

He turned back and called to them, but could not find them. He thought they must be some distance off, so he thrust the parcel into his pocket and went to dinner. On his way, he saw in a lane turning out of the Rue Mouffetard, a child’s coffin, covered with a black pall, laid on three chairs, and illumined by a candle. The two girls in the twilight reverted to his thoughts.

“Poor mothers!” he thought, “there is something even more sad than to see one’s children die,—it is to see them live badly.”

Then, these shadows, which varied his melancholy, left thoughts, and he fell back into his usual reflections. He began thinking of his six months of love and happiness in the open air and broad daylight under the glorious Luxembourg trees.

“How sad my life has become!” he said to himself; “girls constantly appear to me, but formerly they were angels, and now they are ghouls.”

At night, as he undressed to go to bed, his hand felt in his coat pocket the parcel which he had picked up in the boulevard and forgotten. He thought that it would be as well to open it, as the packet might contain the girls’ address, if it belonged to them, or in any case the necessary information to restore it to the person to whom it belonged. He opened the envelope, which was not sealed, and contained four letters, also unsealed. The addresses were on all four, and they exhaled a frightful

perfume of tobacco. The first letter was addressed to *Madame, Madame la Marquise de Grucherau, on the Square opposite the Chamber of Deputies*. Marius said to himself that he would probably find the information he wanted, and as the letter was not sealed he could read it without impropriety. It was drawn up as follows :—

“ Madame la Marquise,

“ The virtue of clemency and piety is that which unites society most closely. Move your Christian feelings, and dain a glance of compasion at this unfortunate Spaniard, and victim to his loyalty and attachment to the sacred cause of legitimacy, who shed his blood, devoted the whole of his fortune to defend this cause, and is now in the greatest misery. He does not doubt that you, honored lady, will grant some assistance to preserve an existence entirely painful for a soldier of honour and education, who is covered with wounds, and he reckons before hand on the humanity which animates you, and the interest which your ladyship takes in so unhapy a nation. His prayer will not be in vain, and His gratitude will retain her charming memory.

“ With the most respectful feelings, I have the honour to be, madame,

“ DON ALVARES, Spanish captain of cavvalry, a Royalist refugee in France, who is travelling for his country, and who wants the means to continue his journey.”

No address was attached to the signature, but Marius hoped to find it in the second letter, of which the superscription was,—“ *To Madame, Madame la Comtesse de Montvernet, No. 9, Rue Cassette.*” This is what Marius read,—

“ My Lady Comtess,

“ It is a unhapy mother of a family of six children, of which the yungest is only eight months old; I ill since my last confinement, deserted by my husband, and havving no ressource in the world, living in the most frightful indijance.

“ Trusting in your ladyship, she has the honour to be, madame, with profound respect,

“ ANTOINETTE BALIZARD.”

Marius passed to the third letter, which was, like the preceding, a petition, and he read in it,—

"*Monsieur Pabourgeot, Elector, wholesale dealer in caps, Rue St Denis, at the corner of the Rue Aux-Fers.*

"I venture to adress this letter to you, to ask you to grant me the pretious favour of your sympathies, and to interest you in a litterary man, who has just sent a drama to the Theatre Français. The subject is historical, and the scene takes place in Auvergne in the time of the Empire; the style, I believe, is natural, laconic, and may posses some merit. There are couplets for singing at four places. The comic, the serious, and the unexpected elements are blended in it with a variety of characters, and a tinge of romance is lightly spread through the whole plot, which moves misteriously, and the finale takes place amid several brilliant tableaux. My principal desire is to sattisfy the desire which progressively animates socity, that is to say, fashion, that capritious and vague whirligig which changes with nearly every wind.

"In spite of these qualities, I have reason to fear that jealousy and the selfishness of privileged authors may obtain my exclusion from the stage, for I am not unaware of the vexation which is caused to new comers.

"Monsieur Pabourgeot, your just reputation as the enlightened protector of litterary men, emboldens me to send to you my daughter, who will explain to you our indijant situation, wanting for bread and fire in this winter season. To tell you that I wish you to accept the homage which I desire to make to you of my drama, and all those that may succeed it, is to prove to you how much I desire the honour of sheltering myself under your ægis, and adorning my writings with your name. If you dain to honour me with the most modest offering, I will at once set to work writing a copy of verses, by which to pay you my debt of grattitude. These verses, which I will try to render as perfect as possible, will be sent to you before they are insirted in the beginning of the drama, and produced on the stage.

"My most respectful homage to Monsieur and Madame Pabourgeot,

"GENFLOT, man of letters.

"P. S.—If it was only forty sous. I appologize for sending my daughter, and not paying my respects personally, but sad reasons of dress do not allow me, alas! to go out."

Marius then opened the last letter, which was addressed to—*The Benevolent gentleman of the church of St Jacques du Haut-pas*, and it contained the following few lines:—

"Benevolent man,—

"If you will deign to accompany my daughter you will witness a miserable calamity, and I will show you my certificates.

"At the sight of these documents your generous soul will be moved by a feeling of sensitive benevolence, for true philosophers always experience lively emotions.

"Allow, compassionate man, that a man must experience the most cruel want, and that it is very painful to obtain any relief, by having it attested by the authorities, as if a man were not at liberty to suffer and die of inanition, while waiting till our misery is relieved. Fate is too cruel to some and too lavish or protecting for others. I await your presence or your offering, if you deign to make one, and I beg you to believe in the grateful feelings with which I have the honour of being, really magnanimous sir,

"Your very humble, and most

obedient servant,

P. FABANTOU, dramatic artist."

After reading these four letters Marius did not find himself much more advanced than before. In the first place not one of the writers gave his address; and next, they appeared to come from four different individuals, "Don Alvarez, Madame Balizard, Genflot the poet, and Fabantou the dramatic artist;" but these letters offered this peculiarity, that they were all in the same hand-writing. What could be concluded from this, save that they came from the same person? Moreover—and this rendered the conjecture even more probable—the paper, which was coarse and yellow, was the same for all four, the tobacco smell was the same, and though an attempt had evidently been made to vary the hand-writing, the same orthographical mistakes were reproduced with the most profound tranquillity, and Genflot, the literary man, was no more exempt from them than the Spanish captain. To strive and divine this mystery was time thrown away, and if he had not picked it up it would have looked like a mystification; Marius was too sad to take kindly even a jest of accident, and lend himself to a game which the street pavement appeared desirous to play with him. He felt as if he were playing at blind man's buff among these four letters and they were mocking him. Nothing, besides, indicated that these letters belonged to the girls whom Marius had met in the boulevard. After all they were papers evidently of no value. Marius returned

them to the envelope, threw the lot into a corner, and went to bed.

At about seven in the morning he had got up and breakfasted, and was trying to set to work, when there came a gentle tap at the door. As he possessed nothing he never took out his key, except very rarely, when he had a pressing job to finish. As a rule, even when out, he left the key in the lock. "You will be robbed," said Mame Bougon. "Of what?" Marius asked. It is a fact, however, that one day a pair of old boots were stolen, to the great triumph of Mame Bougon. There was a second knock, quite as gentle as the first.

"Come in," said Marius.

The door opened.

"What is the matter, Mame Bougon?" Marius continued, without taking his eyes off the books and MSS. on his table.

A voice, which was not Mame Bougon's, replied,— "I beg your pardon, sir."


It was a hollow, cracked, choking voice, the voice of an old man, rendered hoarse by dram-drinking and exposure to the cold. Marius turned sharply and noticed a girl.

CHAPTER LVI.

A ROSE IN MISERY.

A VERY young girl was standing in the half-open door. The sky-light, through which light entered, was exactly opposite the door, and threw upon this face a sallow gleam. She was a wretched, exhausted, fleshless creature, and had only a chemise and a petticoat upon her shivering and frozen nudity. For waist-belt she had a piece of string, for head-dress another,—pointed shoulders emerged from her chemise; she was of an earthy pallor, her hands were red, her mouth degraded, and she had lost teeth, her eye was sunken and hollow, and she had the outline of an abortive girl and the look of a corrupted old woman, or fifty years blended with fifteen. She was one of those beings who are at once weak and horrible, and who make those shudder whom they do not cause to weep.

Marius had risen, and was gazing with a species of stupor at this being, who almost resembled the shadows that traverse



dreams. What was most crushing of all was, that this girl had not come into the world to be ugly, and in her childhood she must even have been pretty. The grace of youth was still struggling with the hideous and premature senility of debauchery and poverty. A remnant of beauty was expiring on this countenance of sixteen, like the pallid sun which dies out under the frightful clouds on the dawn of a winter's day. This face was not absolutely strange to Marius, and he fancied that he had already seen it somewhere.

"What do you want, miss?" he asked.

The girl replied, with her drunken galley-slave's voice,—

"It is a letter for you, Monsieur Marius."

She addressed him by name, and hence he could not doubt but that she had to do with him; but who was this girl, and how did she know his name? Without waiting for any authority, she walked in, walked in boldly, looking around her with a sort of assurance that contracted the heart, at the whole room and the unmade bed. Her feet were bare, and large holes in her petticoat displayed her long legs and thin knees. She was shivering, and held in her hand a letter, which she offered to Marius. On opening the letter, he noticed that the large, clumsy wafer was still damp, which proved that the missive had not come a long distance, and he read,—

"My amicable neighbour and young sir!


"I have herd of your kindness to me, and that you paid my half-year's rent six months ago. I bless you for it, young sir. My eldest daughter will tell you that we have been without a morsel of bread for two days,—four persons, and my wife ill. If I am not deseived in my opinion, I dare to hope that your generous heart will be affected by this statment, and will arouse in you a desire to be propicious to me, by daining to lavish on me a trifling charity.

"I am, with the distinguished consideration which is due to the benefactors of humanity,

"JONDRLETTE.

"P.S. My daughter will wait for your orders, my dear Monsieur Marius."

This letter, in the midst of the obscure adventure which had been troubling Marius since the previous evening, was like a candle in a cellar; all was suddenly lit up. This letter came from where the other letters came. It was the same handwriting, the same style, the same orthography, the same paper, and the same tobacco smell. They were five letters, five



stories, five names, five signatures, and only one writer. The Spanish captain Don Alvarez, the unhappy mother Balizard, the dramatic author Genflot, and the old comedian Fabantou, were all four Jondrette, if, indeed, Jondrette's name were really Jondrette.

During the lengthened period that Marius had inhabited this No. 50-52, he had, as we stated, but rare occasions to see, or even catch a glance of, his very low neighbours. His mind was elsewhere, and where the mind is there is the eye. He must have passed the Jondrettes more than once in the passage and on the stairs, but they were to him merely shadows. He had paid so little attention to them, that on the previous evening he had run against the Jondrette girls on the boulevard without recognizing them, for it was evidently they, and it was with great difficulty that the girl, who had just entered the room, aroused in him, through disgust and pity, a vague fancy that he had met her somewhere before.

Now he saw everything clearly. He comprehended that his neighbour Jondrette had hit upon the trade in his distress of working upon the charity of benevolent persons, that he procured addresses and wrote under supposititious names, to people whom he supposed to be rich and charitable, letters which his children delivered at their risk and peril, for this father had attained such a stage that he hazarded his daughters; he was gambling with destiny and staked them. Marius comprehended that, in all probability, judging from their flight of the previous evening, their panting, their terror, and the slang words he overheard, these unfortunates carried on some other dark trades, and the result of all this was, in the heart of human society such as it is constituted, two wretched beings, who were neither children, nor girls, nor women, but a species of impure and innocent monsters, which were the produce of wretchedness; melancholy beings without age, name, or sex, to whom neither good nor evil is any longer possible, and who, on emerging from childhood, have nothing left in the world, not liberty, nor virtue, nor responsibility; souls that expanded yesterday and are faded to-day, like the flowers which have fallen in the street and are plashed by the mud, while waiting till a wheel crushes them.

While Marius was bending on the young girl an astonished and painful glance, she was walking about the garret with the boldness of a spectre, and without troubling herself in the slightest about her state of nudity. At some moments her unfastened and torn chemise fell almost to her waist. She moved the chairs about, disturbed the toilette articles on the chest of drawers, felt Marius' clothes, and rummaged in every corner.

"Why," she said, "you have a looking-glass!"

And she hummed, as if she had been alone, bits of vaudeville songs and wild choruses, which her guttural and hoarse voice rendered mournful. But beneath this boldness there was something constrained, alarmed, and humiliated, for effrontery is a disgrace. Nothing could well be more sad than to see her fluttering about the room with the movement of a broken-winged bird startled by a dog. It was palpable that with other conditions of education and destiny, the gay and free demeanour of this girl might have been something gentle and charming. Among animals, the creature born to be a dove is never changed into an osprey, that is only possible with men. Marius was thinking, and left her alone, and she walked up to the table.

"Ah!" she said, "books."

A gleam darted from her glassy eye: she continued, and her accent expressed the attitude of being able to boast of something to which no human creature is insensible,—

"I know how to read."

She quickly seized the book lying on the table, and read rather fluently.—

"General Banduin received orders to carry with the five battalions of his brigade the Chateau of Hougomont, which is in the centre of the plain of Waterloo—"

She broke off.

"Ah, Waterloo, I know all about that. It was a battle in which my father was engaged, for he served in the army. We are thorough Bonapartists, we are. Waterloo was fought against the English."

She laid down the book, took up a pen, and exclaimed, "And I can write, too."

She dipped the pen in the ink, and turned to Marius, saying,—

"Would you like a proof? stay, I will write a line to show you."

And ere he had time to answer she wrote on a sheet of white paper in the middle of the table, '*Here are the shops.*' Then, throwing down the pen, she added,—

"There are no errors in spelling, as you can see, for my sister and I were well educated. We have not always been what we are now, we were not made—"

Here she stopped, fixed her glassy eye on Marius, and burst into a laugh, as she said, with an intonation which contained every possible agony, blended with every possible cynicism,—

"Bosh!"

And then she began humming these words, to a lively air,

"J'ai faim, mon père,
Pas de fricot.
J'ai froid, ma mère,
Pas de tricot.
Grelotte,
Lolotte!
Sanglote,
Jacquot!"

She had scarce completed this couplet, ere she exclaimed,—

"Do you ever go to the play, Monsieur Marius? I do so. I have a brother who is a friend of the actors, and gives me tickets every now and then. I don't care for the gallery much, though, for you are so squeezed up; at times too there are noisy people there, and others who smell bad."

Then she stared at Marius, gave him a strange look, and said to him,—

"Do you know, M. Marius, that you are a very good-looking fellow!"

And at the same moment the same thought occurred to both, which made her smile and him blush. She walked up to him, and laid a hand upon his shoulder,—“You don't pay any attention to me, but I know you, M. Marius. I meet you here on the staircase, and then I see you go in to a swell of the name of M. Mabœuf, who lives over at Austerlitz, when I am out that way. Your curly hair becomes you very well.”

Her voice tried to be very soft, and only succeeded in being very low; a part of her words was lost in the passage from the larynx to the lips, as on a pianoforte some keys of which are broken. Marius had gently recoiled.

“I have a packet,” he said, with his cold gravity, “which, I believe, belongs to you. Allow me to deliver it to you.”

And he handed her the envelope which contained the four letters; she clapped her hands and said,—

“We looked for it everywhere.”

Then she quickly seized the parcel, and undid the envelope, while saying,—

“Lord of Lords! how my sister and I *did* look for it! And so you found it? on the boulevard, did you not? it must have been there. You see, it was dropped, while we were running, and it was my brat of a sister who was such an ass. When we got home we could not find it, and, as we did not wish to be beaten, which is unnecessary, which is entirely unnecessary, which is absolutely unnecessary, we said at home

that we had delivered the letters, and that the answer was Nix! and here are the poor letters! Well, and how did you know that they were mine? oh yes, by the writing. So, then, it was you that we ran against last night? We could not see anything, and I said to my sister, 'Is it a gentleman?' and she answered, 'Yes, I think it is a gentleman.'"

While saying this she had unfolded the petition addressed to the "benevolent gentleman of the church of St Jacques, du Haut-pas."

"Hilloh!" she said, "this is the one for the old swell who goes to mass. Why, 'tis just the hour, and I will carry it to him. He will perhaps give us something for breakfast."

Then she burst into a laugh, and added,—

"Do you know what it will be if we breakfast to-day? we shall have our breakfast of the day before yesterday, our dinner of the day before yesterday, our breakfast of yesterday, our dinner of yesterday, all at once this morning. Well, hang it all! if you are not satisfied, rot, dogs!"

This reminded Marius of what the hapless girl had come to get from him; he fumbled in his waistcoat, but found nothing. The girl went on, and seemed speaking as if no longer conscious of the presence of Marius.

"Sometimes I go out at night. Sometimes I do not come home. Before we came here last winter we lived under the arches of the bridges, and kept close together not to be frozen. My little sister cried. How sad the water is. When I thought of drowning myself, I said, 'No, it is too cold.' I go about all alone when I like, and sleep at times in ditches. Do you know, at night, when I walk along the boulevard, I see trees like forks, I see black houses as tall as the towers of Notre Dame, I fancy that the white walls are the river, and I say to myself, 'Why, there is water!' The stars are like illumination lamps, and you might say that they smoke, and the wind puts them out. I feel stunned, as if my hair was lashing my ears; however the night may be, I hear barrel-organs and spinning machinery, but what do I know? I fancy that stones are being thrown at me, and I run away unconsciously, for all turns round me. When you have not eaten it is funny."

And she gazed at him with haggard eyes.

After feeling in the depths of all his pockets, Marius succeeded in getting together five francs sixteen sous; it was at this moment all that he possessed in the world. "Here is my to-day's dinner," he thought, "and to-morrow will take care of itself." He kept the sixteen sous, and gave the girl the five-franc piece, which she eagerly clutched.

"Good!" she said, "there is sunshine."

And, as if the sunshine had the property of melting in her brain avalanches of slang, she went on,—

"Five francs! a shiner! a monarch! ain't that stunning? well, you are a jolly cock, and I do the humble to you. Hurrah for the brick! two days' grub; here's a feed; beans and bacon and a belly-full; you're a oner!"

She pulled her chemise up over her shoulders, gave Marius a deep courtesy, and a familiar wave of the hand, and walked toward the door, saying,—

"Good day, sir, but no matter, I'll go and find my old swell."

As she passed she noticed on the drawers an old crust of dry bread, mouldering in the dust; she caught it up, and bit into it savagely, grumbling,—

"It is good, it is hard; it breaks my teeth!"

Then she left the room.

CHAPTER LVII.

A PROVIDENTIAL SPY-HOLE.

MARIUS had lived for the past five years in poverty, want, and even distress, but he now saw that he had never known what real misery was, and he had just witnessed it—it was the phantom which had just passed before him. For, in truth, he who has only seen man's misery has seen nothing, he must see woman's misery; while he who has seen woman's misery has seen nothing, for he must see the misery of the child. When man has reached the last extremity he has also reached the limit of his resources; and, then, woe to the defenceless beings that surround him! Work, wages, bread, fire, courage, and food, will all fail him at once; the light of day seems extinguished outside, the moral light is extinguished within him. In these shadows man comes across the weakness of the wife and the child, and violently bends them to ignominy.

In such a case, every horror is possible, and despair is surrounded by thin partitions, which all open upon vice and crime. Health, youth, honour, the sacred and retiring delicacy of the still innocent flesh, the heart-virginity and modesty, that

epidermis of the soul, are foully clutched by this groping hand, which seeks resources, finds opprobrium, and puts up with it.

Fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, men, women, and girls, adhere and are aggregated almost like a mineral formation, in this misty promiscuity of sexes, relations, ages, infamies, and innocencies. Leaning against each other, they crouch in a species of den of destiny, and look at each other lamentably. Oh! the unfortunates! how pale they are! how cold they are! it seems as if they belong to a planet much farther from the sun than our own.

This girl was to Marius a sort of emissary from the darkness, and she revealed to him a hideous side of night. Marius almost reproached himself for the pre-occupations of reverie and passion which, up to this day, had prevented him from taking a glance at his neighbours. To have paid their rent was a mechanical impulse, which any one might have had; but he, Marius, ought to have done better. What! only a wall separated himself from these abandoned creatures, who lived groping in night, beyond the pale of other living beings. He elbowed them, he was to some extent the last link of the human race which they could touch; he heard them living, or rather dying, by his side, and he paid no attention to them! Every moment of the day he heard them, through the wall, coming, going, and talking—and he did not listen! and in their words were groans, and he did not hear them!—his thoughts were elsewhere,—engaged with dreams, impossible sun-beams, loves in the air, and follies; and yet, human creatures, his brethren in Christ, his brethren in the people, were slowly dying by his side, dying unnecessarily! He even formed part of their misfortune, and he aggravated it. For, if they had had another neighbour, a neighbour more attentive, less chimerical, an ordinary and charitable man, their indigence would evidently have been noticed, their signals of distress perceived, and they might, perhaps, have been picked up and saved long before. They doubtless seemed very depraved, very corrupt, very vile, and indeed very odious; but persons who fall without being degraded are rare; besides, there is a stage where the unfortunate and the infamous are mingled and confounded in one word, a fatal word, *LES MISÉRABLES*, and with whom lies the fault? And then again, should not the charity be the greater the deeper the fall is?

While reading himself this lecture, for there were occasions on which Marius was his own pedagogue, and reproached himself more than he deserved, he looked at the wall which separated him from the Jondrettes, as if his pitying glance could pass through the partition, and warm the unhappy beings. The

wall was a thin coating of plaster, supported by laths and beams, and which, as we have stated, allowed the murmurs of words and voices to be distinctly heard. A man must be a dreamer like Marius not to have noticed the fact before. No paper was hung on either side of the wall, and its clumsy construction was plainly visible. Almost unconsciously Marius examined this partition; for at times reverie examines, scrutinizes, and observes much like thought does. All at once he rose, for he had just noticed near the ceiling a triangular hole produced by the gap between three laths. The plaster which once covered this hole had fallen off, and by getting on his chest of drawers he could see through this aperture into the room of the Jondrettes. Commiseration has, and should have, its curiosity, and it is permissible to regard misfortune traitorously when we wish to relieve it. "Let me see," thought Marius, "what these people are like, and what state they are in." He clambered on the drawers, put his eye to the hole, and looked.

CHAPTER LVIII.

THE WILD MAN IN HIS LAIR.

CITIES, like forests, have their dens, in which everything that is most wicked and formidable conceals itself. The only difference is, that what hides itself thus in cities is ferocious, unclean, and little, that is to say, ugly; what conceals itself in the forests is ferocious, savage, and grand, that is to say, beautiful. Den for den, those of the beasts are preferable to those of men; and caverns are better than hiding-places. Marius was poor, and his room was indigent; but, in the same way as his poverty was noble, his room was clean. The garret into which he was now looking was abject, dirty, fetid, infectious, dark, and sordid. The furniture only consisted of a straw-bottomed chair, a rickety table, a few old earthenware articles, and in the corners two indescribable beds. The only light came through a sky-light with four panes of glass and festooned with spider-webs. Through this came just sufficient light for the face of a man to seem the face of a spectre. The walls had a leprous look, and were covered with gashes and scars, like a face disfigured by some horrible disease, and a bleary-eyed

damp oozed from them. Obscene designs, clumsily drawn in charcoal, could be distinguished on them.

The room which Marius occupied had a broken-brick flooring, but in this one people walked on the old plaster, which had grown black under the feet. Upon this uneven flooring, in which the dust was, so to speak, incrustated, and which had but one virginity, that of the broom, were capriciously grouped constellations of old shoes, boots, and frightful rags; this room, however, had a chimney, and for this reason was let at forty francs a year. There was something of everything in this fire-place,—a chafing-dish, a pot, some broken planks, rags hanging from nails, a bird-cage, ashes, and even a little fire, for two logs were smoking there sadly. A thing which augmented the horror of this garret was the fact of its being large; it had angles, nooks, black holes under the roof, bays, and promontories. Hence came frightful inscrutable corners, in which it seemed as if spiders large as a fist, wood-lice as large as a foot, and possibly some human monsters, must lurk.

One of the beds was near the door, the other near the window, but the ends of both ran down to the mantel-piece, and faced Marius. In a corner near the hole through which Marius was peeping, a coloured engraving in a black frame, under which was written in large letters, *THE DREAM*, leant against the wall. It represented a sleeping woman and a sleeping child, the child lying on the woman's knees, an eagle in the clouds with a crown in its beak, and the woman removing the crown from the child's head, without awaking it, however; in the background Napoleon, surrounded by a glory, was leaning against a dark blue column, with a yellow capital, that bore the following inscription:

MARINGO.

AUSTERITS.

JENA.

WAGRAMME.

ELOT.

Below this frame a sort of wooden panel, longer than it was wide, was placed on the ground and leaning against the wall. It looked like a picture turned from the spectator, or some sign-board detached from a wall and forgotten there while waiting to be hung again. At the table, on which Marius noticed pen, ink, and paper, a man was seated of about sixty years of age, short, thin, livid, haggard, with a sharp, cruel, and listless look, a hideous scamp. If Lavater had examined this face he would have found in it the vulture blended with the attor-

ney's clerk; the bird of prey and the man of trickery rendering each other more ugly and more perfect—the man of trickery rendering the bird of prey ignoble, and the bird of prey rendering the man of trickery horrible. This man had a long grey beard, and wore a woman's chemise, which allowed his hairy chest, and naked arms, bristling with grey hairs, to be seen. Under this chemise might be noticed muddy trousers, and boots out of which his toes stuck. He had a pipe in his mouth, and was smoking; there was no bread in the garret, but there was still tobacco. He was writing, probably some letter like those which Marius had read. On one corner of the table could be seen an old broken-backed volume, the form of which, the old 12mo of circulating libraries, indicated a romance; on the cover figured the following title, printed in large capitals, —GOD, THE KING, HONOUR, AND THE LADIES. BY DUCRAY DUMINIL, 1814. While writing, the man was talking aloud, and Marius heard his words:

“Only to think that there is no equality, even when a man is dead! Just look at Père La Chaise! The great ones, those who are rich, are up above, in the Acacia avenue which is paved, and reach it in a coach. The little folk, the poor people, the wretched—they are put down at the bottom where there is mud up to your knees, in holes and damp, and they are placed there that they may rot all the sooner. You can't go to see them without sinking into the ground.”

Here he stopped—smote the table with his fist—and added, while he gnashed his teeth,—

“Oh! I could eat the world!”

A stout woman, who might be forty or one hundred, was crouched up near the chimney-piece on her naked feet. She too was only dressed in a chemise, and a cotton petticoat, pieced with patches of old cloth, and an apron of coarse canvas concealed one half of the petticoat. Though this woman was sitting all of a heap you could see that she was very tall, and a species of giantess by her husband's side. She had frightful hair, of a reddish auburn, beginning to turn grey, which she thrust back every now and then with the enormous strong hands, with flat nails. By her side, on the ground, was lying an open volume, of the same form as the other, probably part of the same romance. On one of the beds Marius caught a glimpse of a tall, little, sickly girl, sitting up almost naked, and with hanging feet, who did not seem to hear, see, or live; she was, doubtless, the younger sister of the one who had come to him. She appeared to be eleven or twelve years of age, but on examining her attentively it could be seen that she was at

least fourteen ; it was the girl who said on the boulevard the previous night, "I bolted, bolted, bolted." She was of that backward class who keep down for a long time and then shoot up quickly and suddenly. It is indigence which produces these human plants, and these creatures have neither infancy nor adolescence. At fifteen they seem twelve, and at sixteen they appear twenty ; to-day it is a little girl, to-morrow a woman ; we might almost say that they stride through life in order to reach the end more rapidly ; at this moment, however, she had the look of a child.

In this lodging there was not the slightest sign of work ; not a loom, a spinning-wheel, or a single tool, but in one corner were some iron implements of dubious appearance. It was that dull indolence which follows despair and precedes death. Marius gazed for some time at this mournful interior, which was more terrifying than the interior of a tomb, for the human soul could be seen stirring in it and life palpitating. The garret, the cellar, the hole, in which some indigent people crawl in the lowest part of the social edifice, is not exactly the sepulchre, but it is the antechamber to it ; but like those rich men who display their greatest magnificence at the entrance to their palace, it seems that death, which is close at hand, places all its greatest wretchedness in this vestibule. The man was silent, the woman did not speak, and the girl did not seem to breathe ; the pen could be heard moving across the paper. The man growled, without ceasing to write, "Scoundrels, scoundrels, all are scoundrels."

The variation upon Solomon's exclamation drew a sigh from the wife.

"Calm yourself, my love," she said, "do not hurt yourself, darling. You are too good to write to all those people, dear husband."

In misery bodies draw more closely together, as in cold weather, but hearts are estranged. This woman, to all appearance, must have loved this man with the amount of love within her, but probably this had been extinguished in the daily and mutual reproaches of the frightful distress that pressed upon the whole family, and she now only had the ashes of affection for her husband within her. Still, caressing appellations, as frequently happens, had survived : she called him *darling*, *pet*, *husband*, with her lips, but her heart was silent. The man continued to write.

CHAPTER LIX.

STRATEGY AND TACTICS.

MARIUS, with an aching heart, was just going to descend from the species of observatory which he had improvised, when a noise attracted his attention, and made him remain at his post. The door of the garret was suddenly opened, and the elder daughter appeared on the threshold. She had on her feet clumsy men's shoes covered with mud, which had even plashed her red ankles, and she was covered with an old ragged cloak, which Marius had not noticed an hour previously, and which she had probably left at his door, in order to inspire greater sympathy, and put on again when she went out. She came in, shut the door after her, stopped to fetch breath, for she was panting, and then cried, with an expression of triumph and joy,—

"He is coming!"

The father turned his eyes to her, the mother turned her head, and the little girl did not move.

"Who?" the father asked.

"The gentleman."

"The philanthropist?"

"Yes."

"From the church of St Jacques?"

"Yes. He is following me."

"Are you sure?"

"He is coming in a hackney coach, I tell you."

"A hackney coach! why, it is Rothschild!"

The father rose.

"Why are you sure? if he is coming in a coach, how is it that you got here before him? did you give him the address, and are you certain you told him the last door on the right in the passage? I only hope he will not make a mistake. Did you find him at church? did he read my letter, and what did he say to you?"

"Ta, ta, ta," said the girl, "how you gallop, my good man. I went into the church, he was at his usual place, I made a courtesy and handed him the letter, he read it, and said to me, 'Where do you live, my child?' I said, 'I will show you the way, sir;' he said, 'No, give me your address, for my

daughter has some purchases to make. I will take a hackney coach, and be at your abode as soon as you.' I gave him the address, and when I mentioned the house he seemed surprised, and hesitated for a moment, but then said, 'No matter, I will go.' When mass was over I saw him leave the church and get into a coach with his daughter. And I carefully told him the last door on the right at the end of the passage."

"And what tells you that he will come?"

"I have just seen the coach turn into the Rue du Petit Banquier, and that is why I ran."

"How do you know it is the same coach?"

"Because I noticed the number, of course."

"What was it?"

"Four hundred and forty."

"Good, you are a clever girl."

The girl looked boldly at her father, and said, as she pointed to the shoes on her feet,—

"It is possible that I am a clever girl; but I say that I will not put on those shoes again; in the first place, on account of my health, and, secondly, for the sake of decency. I know nothing more annoying than shoes which are too big for you, and go *gji, gji, gji*, along the road. I would sooner be bare-footed."

"You are right," the father replied, in a gentle voice, which contrasted with the girl's rudeness: "but the poor are not admitted into churches unless they wear shoes; God's presence must not be entered bare-foot," he added bitterly. Then he returned to the object that occupied him.

"And so you are sure that he will come?"

"He is at my heels," she replied.

The man drew himself up, and there was a species of illumination on his face.

"Wife," he cried, "you hear! Here is the philanthropist, put out the fire."

The stupefied mother did not stir, but the father, with the agility of a mountebank, seized the cracked pot, which stood on the chimney-piece, and threw water on the logs. Then he said to his elder daughter,—

"Pull the straw out of the chair."

As his daughter did not understand him, he seized the chair and kicked the seat out; his leg passed through it, and while drawing it out, he asked the girl,—

"Is it cold?"

"Very cold, it is snowing."

The father turned to the younger girl, who was on the bed, near the window, and shouted in a thundering voice,—

"Come off the bed directly, idler; you never will do anything: break a pane of glass!"

The little girl jumped off the bed, shivering.

"Break a pane!" he continued.

The girl was quite stunned, and did not move.

"Do you hear me?" the father repeated, "I tell you to break a pane."

The child, with a sort of terrified obedience, stood on tip-toe, and broke a pane with her fist; the glass fell with a great clash.

"All right!" said the father.

He was serious and active, and his eye rapidly surveyed every corner of the garret; he was like a general who makes his final preparations at the moment when an action is about to begin. The mother, who had not yet said a word, rose and asked in a slow, dull voice, the words seeming to issue as if frozen,—

"Darling, what do you intend to do?"

"Go to bed," the man replied.

The tone admitted of no deliberation, the mother obeyed, and threw herself heavily on one of the beds. A sobbing was now audible in a corner.

"What is that?" the father cried.

The younger girl, without leaving the gloom in which she was crouching, showed her bleeding hand. In breaking the glass she had cut herself, she had crawled close to her mother's bed, and was now crying silently. It was the mother's turn to draw herself up and cry.

"You see what nonsensical acts you commit! she has cut herself in breaking the window."

"All the better," said the man, "I expected it."

"How all the better?" the woman continued.

"Silence!" the father replied, "I suppress the liberty of the press."

Then, tearing the chemise which he wore, he made a bandage, with which he quickly wrapped up the girl's bleeding hand; this done, his eye settled on the torn shirt with satisfaction.

"And the shirt too!" he said, "all this looks well."

An icy blast blew through the pane and entered the room. The external fog penetrated it, and dilated like a white wadding pulled open by invisible fingers. The snow could be seen

falling through the broken pane, and the cold promised by the Candlemas sun had really arrived. The father took a look around him, as if to make sure that he had forgotten nothing, then he fetched an old spade and strewed the ashes over the wet logs so as to conceal them entirely. Then getting up and leaning against the chimney-piece, he said,—

“Now we can receive the philanthropist.”

CHAPTER LX.

A SUNBEAM IN THE GARRET.

THE elder girl walked up to her father, and laid her hand in his.

“Just feel how cold I am!” she said.

“Stuff!” the father answered, “I am much colder than that.”

The mother cried impetuously,—

“You always have everything better than the others, the evil even.”

“To kennel!” the man said.

The mother, looked at by him in a certain way, held her tongue, and there was a momentary silence in the den. The elder girl was carelessly removing the mud from the edge of her cloak, and her younger sister continued to sob. The mother had taken her head between her hands, and covered it with kisses, while whispering,—

“Pray do not go on so, my treasure, it will be nothing, so don’t cry, or you will vex your father.”

“No,” the father cried, “on the contrary, sob away, for that does good.”

Then he turned to the elder girl,—

“Why, he is not coming! suppose he were not to come! I should have broken my pane, put out my fire, unseated my chair, and torn my shirt all for nothing.”

“And hurt the little one,” the mother murmured.

“Do you know,” the father continued, “that it is infernally cold in this devil’s own garret? Suppose the man did not come! but no, he is keeping us waiting, and says to himself, ‘Well, they will wait my pleasure, they are sent into the world for that!’ Oh! how I hate the rich, and with what joy, jubi-

lation, enthusiasm, and satisfaction, would I strangle them all! All the rich, I say, those pretended charitable men who play the devout, attend mass, keep in with the priests and believe themselves above us, and who come to humiliate us, and bring us clothes. How they talk! they bring us old rubbish not worth four sous and bread; but it is not that I want, you pack of scoundrels, but money. Ah, money! never! because they say that we would go and drink, and that we are drunkards and idlers. And they, what are they, pray, and what have they been in their time? Thieves, for they could not have grown rich without that. Oh! society ought to be taken by the four corners of a table-cloth, and the whole lot thrown into the air! all would be broken, very possibly, but at any rate no one would have anything, and that would be so much gained! But what is your humbug of a benevolent gentleman about? will he come? perhaps the animal has forgotten the address. I will bet that the old brute—”

At this moment there was a gentle tap at the door; the man rushed forward and opened it, while exclaiming with deep bows and smiles of adoration,—

“Come in, sir, deign to enter, my respected benefactor, as well as your charming daughter.”

A man of middle age and a young lady stood in the doorway; Marius had not left his post, and what he felt at this moment is beyond the human tongue.

It was She; and any one who has loved knows the radiant meaning conveyed in the three letters that form the word She. It was certainly she, though Marius could hardly distinguish her through the luminous vapour which had suddenly spread over his eyes. It was the gentle creature he had lost, the star which had gleamed on him for six months, it was the forehead, the mouth, the lovely mouth which had produced night by departing. The eclipse was over, and she now reappeared—reappeared in this darkness, in this attic, in this filthy den, in this horror. Marius trembled. What! it was she! the palpitation of his heart affected his sight, and he felt ready to burst into tears. What! he saw her again after seeking her so long! it seemed to him as if he had lost his soul and had just found it again. She was still the same, though, perhaps, a little paler; her delicate face was framed in a violet velvet bonnet, and her waist was hidden by a black satin pelisse, a glimpse of her little foot in a silk boot could be caught under her long dress. She was accompanied by M. Leblanc, and she walked into the room and placed a rather large parcel on the table. The elder girl had withdrawn behind the door and looked with

a jealous eye at the velvet bonnet, the satin pelisse, and the charming, happy face.

The garret was so dark that persons who came into it felt much as if they were going into a cellar. The two new-comers, therefore, advanced with some degree of hesitation, scarce distinguishing the vague forms around them, while they were perfectly seen and examined by the eyes of the denizens in the attic, who were accustomed to this gloom. M. Leblanc walked up to Father Jondrette, with his sad and gentle smile, and said,—

“You will find in this parcel, sir, new apparel, woollen stockings, and blankets.”

“Our angelic benefactor overwhelms us,” Jondrette said, bowing to the ground; then, bending down to the ear of his elder daughter, he added in a hurried whisper, while the two visitors were examining this lamentable interior,—

“Did I not say so? clothes but no money. They are all alike. By the way, how was the letter to the old ass signed?”

“Fabantou.”

“The actor, all right.”

It was lucky that Jondrette asked this, for at the same moment M. Leblanc turned to him, and said with the air of a person who is trying to remember the name,—

“I see that you are much to be pitied, Monsieur—”

“Fabantou,” Jondrette quickly added.

“Monsieur Fabantou, yes, that is it, I remember.”

“An actor, sir, who has been successful in his time.”

Here Jondrette evidently believed the moment arrived to trap his philanthropist, and he shouted in a voice which had some of the bombast of the country showman, and the humility of the professional beggar,—“A pupil of Talma, sir! I am a pupil of Talma! fortune smiled upon me formerly, but now, alas! the turn of misfortune has arrived. You see, my benefactor, we have no bread, no fire. My poor babies have no fire. My sole chair without a seat! a pane of glass broken! in such weather as this! my wife in bed, ill!”

“Poor woman!” said M. Leblanc.

“My child hurt,” Jondrette added.

The child, distracted by the arrival of the strangers, was staring at the “young lady,” and ceased sobbing.

“Cry, I tell you, roar!” Jondrette whispered to her. At the same time he squeezed her bad hand. All this was done with the talent of a conjurer. The little one uttered piercing cries, and the adorable girl whom Marius called in his heart, “his Ursule,” eagerly went up to her.

"Poor dear child!" she said.

"You see, respected young lady," Jondrette continued, "her hand is bleeding. It is the result of an accident which happened to her while working at a factory to earn six sous a day. It is possible that her arm will have to be cut off."

"Really?" the old gentleman said in alarm.

The little girl, taking this remark seriously, began sobbing again her loudest.

"Alas, yes, my benefactor!" the father answered.

For some minutes past Jondrette had been looking at the "philanthropist" in a peculiar way, and while speaking seemed to be scrutinizing him attentively, as if trying to recall his recollections. All at once, profiting by a moment during which the new-comers were questioning the little girl about her injured hand, he passed close to his wife, who was lying in her bed with a surprised and stupid air, and said to her, in a hurried whisper,—

"Look at that man!"

Then he turned to M. Leblanc, and continued his lamentations.

"Look, sir! my sole clothing consists of a chemise of my wife's, all torn, in the heart of winter. I cannot go out for want of a coat, and if I had the smallest bit of a coat I would go and call on Mademoiselle Mars, who knows me, and is much attached to me; does she still live in the Rue de la Tour des Dames? Do you know, sir, that we played together in the provinces, and that I shared her laurels? Célimène would come to my help, sir, and Elmire give alms to Belisarius. But no, nothing! and not a half-penny piece in the house! my wife ill, not a sou! my daughter dangerously injured, not a sou! my wife suffers from shortness of breath—it comes from her age, and then the nervous system is mixed up in it. She requires assistance and so does my daughter. But the physician and the apothecary, how are they to be paid, if I have not a farthing? I would kneel down before a decime, sir. You see to what the arts are reduced! And do you know, my charming young lady, and you, my generous protector, who exhale virtue and goodness, and who perfume the church where my poor child sees you daily when she goes to say her prayers! for I am bringing up my daughters in religion, sir, and did not wish them to turn to the stage. I do not jest, sir, read them lectures of honour, morality, and virtue. Just ask them! they must go straight, for they have a father. They are not wretched girls who begin by having no family, and finish by marrying the public. Such a girl is Miss Nobody, and becomes Madame all

the World. There must be nothing of that sort in the Fabantou family! I intend to educate them virtuously, and they must be respectable, and honest, and believe in God's Holy name. Well, sir, worthy sir, do you know what will happen to-morrow? To-morrow is the fatal 4th February, the last respite my landlord has granted me, and if I do not pay my rent by to-night my eldest daughter, myself, my wife with her fever, my child with her wound, will be all four of us turned out of here into the street, shelterless in the rain and snow. That is the state of the case, sir! I owe four quarters, a year's rent, that is to say, sixty francs."

Jondrette lied, for four quarters would only have been forty francs, and he could not owe four, as it was not six months since Marius had paid two for him. M. Leblanc took a five-franc piece from his pocket and threw it on the table. Jondrette had time to growl in his grown-up daughter's ear,—

"The scamp! what does he expect me to do with his five francs? They will not pay for the chair and pane of glass. There's the result of making an outlay."

In the mean while, M. Leblanc had taken off a heavy brown coat, which he wore over his blue one, and thrown it on the back of a chair.

"Monsieur Fabantou," he said, "I have only these five francs about me, but I will take my daughter home and return to-night. Is it not to-night that you have to pay?"

Jondrette's face was lit up with a strange expression, and he hurriedly answered,—

"Yes, respected sir, I must be with my landlord by eight o'clock."

"I will be here by six, and bring you the sixty francs."

"My benefactor!" Jondrette exclaimed wildly, and he added in a whisper,—

"Look at him carefully, wife."

M. Leblanc had given his arm to the lovely young lady, and was turning to the door.

"Till this evening, my friends," he said.

"At six o'clock?" Jondrette asked.

"At six o'clock precisely."

At this moment the overcoat left on the back of the chair caught the eye of the elder girl.

"Sir," she said, "you are forgetting your great coat."

Jondrette gave his daughter a crushing glance, accompanied by a formidable shrug of the shoulders, but M. Leblanc turned and replied smilingly,—

"I do not forget it, I'll leave it."

"Oh, my protector," said Jondrette, "my august benefactor, I am melting into tears! permit me to conduct you to your vehicle."

"If you go out," M. Leblanc remarked, "put on that overcoat, for it is really very cold."

Jondrette did not let this be said twice, but eagerly put on the brown coat. Then they all three went out, Jondrette preceding the two strangers.

CHAPTER LXI.

THE TARIFF OF CAB-FARES.

MARIUS had lost nothing of all this scene, and yet in reality he had seen nothing. His eyes remained fixed on the maiden, his heart had, so to speak, seized and entirely enfolded her from her first step into the garret. During the whole time she had been there he had lived that life of ecstasy which suspends material perceptions, and concentrates the whole mind upon one point. He contemplated not the girl, but the radiance which was dressed in a satin pelisse and a velvet bonnet. Had the planet Sirius entered the room he would not have been more dazzled. While she was opening the parcel, and unfolding the clothes and blankets, questioning the sick mother kindly, and the little wounded girl tenderly, he watched her every movement, and tried to hear her words. Though he knew her eyes, her forehead, her beauty, her waist, and her walk, he did not know the sound of her voice. He fancied that he had caught a few words once at the Luxembourg, but he was not absolutely sure. He would have given ten years of his life to hear her, and to carry off in his soul a little of this music, but all was lost in the lamentable braying of Jondrette's trumpet. This mingled a real anger with Marius' ravishment, and he devoured her with his eyes, for he could not imagine that it was really this divine creature whom he perceived among these unclean beings in this monstrous den; he fancied that he saw a humming-bird among frogs.

When she left the room he had but one thought,—to follow her, to attach himself to her trail, not to leave her till he knew where she lived, or at least not to lose her again after having

so miraculously found her. He leapt off the drawers, and seized his hat, but just as he laid his hand on the latch and was going out a reflection arrested him; the passage was long, the staircase steep, Jondrette chattering, and M. Leblanc had doubtless not yet got into his coach again. If, turning in the passage, or on the stairs, he were to perceive him, Marius, in this house, he would assuredly be alarmed, and find means to escape him again, and so all would be over for the second time. What was to be done? wait awhile? but during this delay the vehicle might start off. Marius was perplexed, but at length risked it, and left the room. There was no one in the passage, and he ran to the stairs, and as there was no one upon them, he hurried down and reached the boulevard just in time to see a hackney coach turning the corner of the Rue du Petit Banquier, on its road to Paris.

Marius rushed in that direction, and, on reaching the corner of the boulevard, saw the hackney coach again rapidly rolling along the Rue Mouffetard; it was already some distance off, and he had no means of catching it up. Running after it was an impossibility; and besides, a man running at full speed after the vehicle would be seen from it, and the father would recognize him. At this moment, by an extraordinary and marvellous accident, Marius perceived a cab passing along the boulevard, empty. There was only one thing to be done, get into this cab and follow the hackney coach; that was sure, efficacious, and without danger. Marius made the driver a sign to stop, and shouted to him, "By the hour!" Marius had no cravat on, he wore his old working coat, from which buttons were missing, and one of the plaits of his shirt was torn. The driver stopped, winked, and held out to Marius his left hand, as he gently rubbed his forefinger with his thumb.

"What do you mean?" Marius asked.

"Payment in advance," said the coachman.

Marius remembered that he had only sixteen sous in his pocket.

"How much is it?"

"Forty sous."

"I will pay on returning."

The driver, in reply, whistled the air of La Palisse, and lashed his horse. Marius watched the cab go off with a haggard look; for the want of twenty-four sous, he lost his joy, his happiness, his love! he fell back into night! he had seen, and was becoming blind again. He thought bitterly, and, we must add, with deep regret, of the five francs which he had given that very morning to the wretched girl. If he had still

had them, he would be saved, would emerge from limbo and darkness, and be drawn from isolation, spleen, and widowhood; he would have re-attached the black thread of his destiny to the beauteous golden thread which had just floated before his eyes, only to be broken again! He returned to his garret in despair. He might have said to himself that M. Leblanc had promised to return that evening, and that then he must contrive to follow him better; but in his contemplation he had scarce heard him.

Just as he was going up the stairs he noticed on the other side of the wall, and against the deserted wall of the Rue de la Barrière des Gobelins, Jondrette, wrapped up in the "philanthropist's" over-coat, and conversing with one of those ill-looking men who are usually called prowlers at the barrière; men with equivocal faces and suspicious soliloquies, who look as if they entertain evil thoughts, and most usually sleep by day, which leads to the supposition that they work at night. These two men, standing to talk in the snow, which was falling heavily, formed a group which a policeman would certainly have observed, but which Marius scarce noticed. Still, though his preoccupation was so painful, he could not help saying to himself that the man to whom Jondrette was talking was like a certain Panchaud, *alias* Printanier, *alias* Bigrenaille, whom Courfeyrac had once pointed out to him, and who was regarded in the quarter as a very dangerous night-bird. This Panchaud afterwards figured in several criminal trials, and eventually became a celebrated villain, though at this time he was only a famous villain. At the present day he is in a traditional state among the bandits and burglars. He was the model toward the end of the last reign, and people used to talk about him in the Lion's den at La Force, at nightfall, at the hour when groups assemble and converse in whispers. In this prison, and at the exact spot where the sewer, which served as the way of escape for the thirty prisoners in 1843, opened, this name, PANCHAUD, might be seen daringly cut in the wall over the sewer, in one of his attempted escapes. In 1832 the police already had their eye on him, but he had not yet fairly made a start.

CHAPTER LXII.

WRETCHEDNESS HELPS SORROW.

MARIUS ascended the stairs slowly, and at the moment when he was going to enter his cell he perceived behind him, in the passage, the elder of Jondrette's girls following him. This girl was odious in his sight, for it was she who had his five francs, but it was too late to ask them back from her, for both the hackney coach and the cab were now far away. Besides, she would not return them to him. As for questioning her about the abode of the persons who had been here just now, that was useless, and it was plain that she did not know, for the letter signed Fabantou was addressed to the "benevolent gentleman of the church of St Jacques du Haut-pas." Marius went into his room and threw the door to after him, but it did not close; he turned and saw a hand in the aperture.

"Who's that?" he asked.

It was the girl.

"Oh! it's you!" Marius continued almost harshly, "always you! What do you want of me?"

She seemed thoughtful, and made no answer, and she no longer had her boldness of the morning; she did not come in, but stood in the dark passage, where Marius perceived her through the half-open door.

"Well, answer," said Marius, "what do you want of me?"

She raised her dull eye, in which a sort of lustre seemed to be vaguely illumined, and said,—

"Monsieur Marius, you look sad; what is the matter with you?"

"Nothing."

"Yes, there is!"

"Leave me alone!"

Marius pushed the door again, but she still held it.

"Stay," she said, "you are wrong. Though you are not rich, you were kind this morning, and be so again now. You gave me food, and now tell me what is the matter with you. It is easy to see that you are in sorrow, and I do not wish you to be so. What can I do to prevent it, and can I be of any service to you? Employ me; I do not ask for your secrets, and you need not tell them to me, but I may be of use to you. Surely I can help you, as I help my father. When there are

any letters to deliver, or any address to be found by following people, or asking from door to door, I am employed. Well, you can tell me what is the matter with you, and I will go and speak to persons. Now and then it is sufficient for some one to speak to persons in order to find out things, and all is arranged. Employ me."

An idea crossed Marius' mind, for no branch is despised when we feel ourselves falling. He walked up to the girl.

"Listen to me," he said; "you brought an old gentleman and his daughter here."

"Yes."

"Do you know their address?"

"No."

"Find it for me."

The girl's eye, which was dull, had become joyous, but now it became gloomy.

"Is that what you want?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Do you know them?"

"No."

"That is to say," she added quickly, "you don't know her, but you would like to know her."

This "them," which became "her," had something most significant and bitter about it.

"Well, can you do it?" Marius said.

"You shall have the 'lovely young lady's' address."

In these words there was again a meaning which annoyed Marius, so he went on,—

"Well, no matter! the father and daughter's address, their address, I say."

She looked at him fixedly.

"What will you give me for it?"

"Whatever you like."

"Whatever I like? you shall have the address."

She hung her head, and then closed the door with a hurried gesture; Marius was alone again. He fell into a chair, with his head and elbows on his bed, sunk in thoughts which he could not grasp, and suffering from a dizziness. All that had happened since the morning, the apparition of the angel, her disappearance, and what this creature had just said to him, a gleam of hope floating in an immense despair—this is what confusedly filled his brain. All at once he was violently dragged out of his reverie, for he heard Jondrette's loud, hard voice uttering words full of the strangest interest for him.

"I tell you that I am sure, and that I recognized him."

Of whom was Jondrette talking, and whom had he recog-

nized? M. Leblanc, the father of "his Ursule." What! did Jondrette know him? Was Marius going to obtain, in this sudden and unexpected fashion, all the information without which his life was obscure for himself? was he at last going to know who she was whom he loved, and who her father was? Was the thick cloud that covered them on the point of clearing off? would the veil be rent asunder? Oh, heavens! He bounded rather than ascended upon the chest of drawers and resumed his place at the aperture in the partition: once more he saw the interior of Jondrette's den. There was no change in the appearance of the family, save that mother and daughters had put on stockings and flannel waistcoats taken out of the parcel, and two new blankets were thrown on the beds. The man had evidently just returned, for he was out of breath; his daughters were seated near the chimney-piece on the ground, the elder tying up the younger's hand. The mother was crouching on the bed near the fire-place, with an astonished face, while Jondrette was walking up and down the room with long strides and extraordinary eyes. The woman, who seemed frightened and struck with stupor before him, ventured to say,—

"What, really, are you sure?"

"Sure! it is eight years ago, but I can recognize him! I recognized him at once. What! did it not strike you?"

"No."

"And yet I said to you, 'Pay attention!' Why, it is his figure, his face, very little older—for there are some people who never age, though I do not know how they manage it, and the sound of his voice. He is better dressed, that's all! Ah! you mysterious old villain, I hold you!"

He stopped and said to his daughters,—

"Be off, you two!—It is funny that it did not strike you."

They rose to obey, and the mother stammered,—

"With her bad hand?"

"The air will do it good," said Jondrette. "Off with you."

It was evident that this man was one of those who are not answered. The girls went out, but just as they passed the door the father clutched the elder by the arm, and said, with a peculiar accent,—

"You will be here at five o'clock precisely, both of you, for I shall want you."

Marius redoubled his attention. When left alone with his wife, Jondrette began walking up and down the room again, and took two or three turns in silence. Then he spent several minutes thrusting the tail of the chemise which he wore into

his trousers. All at once he turned to his wife, folded his arms, and exclaimed,—

“And shall I tell you something? the young lady—”

“Well, what?” the wife retorted.

Marius could not doubt, they were really talking about her. He listened with ardent anxiety, and all his life was in his ears. But Jondrette had stooped down, and was whispering to his wife. Then he rose, and ended aloud,—

“It is she.”

“That one?” the wife asked.

“That one!” said the husband.

No expression could render all there was in the mother’s *that one*; it was surprise, rage, hatred, and passion mingled and combined in a monstrous intonation. A few words, doubtless a name which her husband whispered in her ear, were sufficient to arouse this fat, crushed woman, and to make her more than repulsive and frightful.

“It is not possible,” she exclaimed; “when I think that my daughters go about barefooted, and have not a gown to put on! What! a satin pelisse, a velvet bonnet, clothes worth more than two hundred francs, so that you might take her for a lady! no! you are mistaken! and, then, the other was hideous, while this one is not ugly, indeed, rather good-looking: oh, it cannot be!”

“And I tell you that it is; you will see.”

At this absolute assertion the woman raised her large red and white face and looked at the ceiling with a hideous expression. At this moment she appeared to Marius even more formidable than her husband, for she was a sow with the glance of a tigress.

“What!” she continued, “that horrible young lady who looked at my daughters with an air of pity is that vagabond! Oh! I should like to dance on her stomach in wooden shoes.”

She leaped off the bed, and stood for a moment unkempt, with swollen nostrils, parted lips, and clenched fists; then she fell back again on the bed. The husband walked up and down and paid no attention to his wife. After a short silence he went up to her, and stood in front of her with folded arms, as he had done a few moments previously.

“And shall I tell you something else?”

“What?” she asked.

He replied in a low, guttural voice, “That my fortune is made.”

The wife looked at him in the way which means, “Can the man who is talking to me have suddenly gone mad?” He continued,—

"Thunder! I have been a long time a parishioner of the parish of die-of-hunger-if-you-are-cold, and die-of-cold-if-you-have-bread! I have had enough of that misery! I am not jesting, for I no longer consider this comical. I have had enough jokes, good God! and want no more farces, by the Eternal Father! I wish to eat when I am hungry, and drink when I am thirsty: to gorge, sleep, and do nothing. I want to have my turn now, and mean to be a bit of a millionaire before I rot!" He walked up and down the room and added, "Like the rest!"

"What do you mean?" his wife asked.

He shook his head, winked, and raised his voice like a street quack, who is going to furnish a proof.

"What I mean? listen!"

"Not so loud," said his wife, "if it is business which ought not to be overheard."

"Nonsense! by whom? by the neighbour? I saw him go out just now. Besides, what does that long-legged ass listen to? and then I tell you I saw him go out." Still, by a species of instinct, Jondrette lowered his voice, though not so low that his remarks escaped Marius. A favourable circumstance was that the fallen snow deadened the sound of the vehicles on the boulevard. This is what Marius heard:—

"Listen carefully. The Crœsus is trapped, or as good as trapped. It is done, arranged, and I have seen the people. He will come at six this evening to bring the sixty francs, the vagabond! Did you notice how I plummed him about my landlord on February 4th? Why, it is not a quarter-day, the ass. Well, he will come at six o'clock, and at that hour the neighbour has gone to dinner, and Mother Bourgon is washing up dishes in town, so there will be no one in the house. The neighbour never comes in before eleven o'clock. The little ones will be on the watch, you will help us, and he will execute himself."

"And suppose he does not?" the wife asked. Jondrette made a sinister gesture, and said, "We will do it for him."

And he burst into a laugh: it was the first time that Marius saw him laugh, and this laugh was cold and gentle, and produced a shudder. Jondrette opened a cupboard near the fireplace, and took out an old cap, which he put on his head, after brushing it with his cuff.

"Now," he said, "I am going out, for I have some more people to see, good men. I shall be away as short a time as possible, for it is a famous affair; and do you keep house."

And he stood thoughtfully with his hands in his trousers' pockets and suddenly exclaimed,—

"Do you know that it is very lucky he did not recognize me, for if he had done so he would not have returned, and would have slipped from us. It was my beard that saved us, my romantic beard, my pretty little beard."

And he laughed again. He went to the window: the snow was still falling, and striping the grey sky.

"What filthy weather!" he said.

Then he buttoned up his great coat.

"The skin is too big, but no matter," he added; "it was devilish lucky that the old villain left it for me, for had he not I could not have gone out, and the whole affair would have been spoiled. On what slight accidents things depend!"

And, pulling his cap over his eyes, he went out, but had only gone a short distance when the door opened again, and his sharp, intelligent face reappeared in the aperture.

"I forgot," he said, "you will get a chafing-dish of charcoal ready."

And he threw into his wife's apron the five-franc piece which the "philanthropist" left him.

"How many bushels of charcoal?" the wife asked.

"Two, at least."

"That will cost thirty sous, and with the rest I will buy some grub."

"Hang it, no."

"Why?"

"Don't spend the five *balls*."

"Why not?"

"Because I have something to buy too."

"What?"

"Something."

"How much do you want?"

"Where is the nearest ironmonger's?"

"In the Rue Mouffetard."

"Ah, yes! at the corner of a street. I remember the shop."

"But tell me how much you want for what you have to buy."

"From fifty sous to three francs."

"There won't be much left for dinner."

"Don't bother about eating to-day; there is something better to do."

"That's enough, my jewel."

Jondrette closed the door again, and then Marius heard his steps as he went along the passage and down the stairs. It struck one at this moment from St Medard's.

CHAPTER LXIII.

PLOT AND COUNTERPLOT.

MARIUS, dreamer though he was, possessed, as we have said, a firm and energetic nature. His habits of solitary contemplation, by developing compassion and sympathy within him, had perhaps diminished the power of being irritated, but left intact the power of becoming indignant: he had the benevolence of a brahmin and the sternness of a judge, and while he pitied a toad he crushed a viper. At present he had a nest of vipers before him, and he said, "I must set my foot upon these villains." Not one of the enigmas which he hoped to see cleared up was solved; on the contrary, they had become rather denser, and he had learned no more about the pretty girl of the Luxembourg and the man whom he called M. Leblanc, save that Jondrette knew them. Through the dark words which had been uttered he only saw one thing distinctly, that a snare was preparing, an obscure but terrible snare; that they both ran an imminent danger, she probably, and the father certainly, and that he must save them, and foil the hideous combinations of the Jondrettes by destroying their spider's web.

He watched the woman for a moment; she had taken an old iron furnace from the corner, and was rummaging among the tools. He got off the chest of drawers as gently as he could, and careful not to make any noise. In his terror at what was preparing, and the horror with which the Jondrettes filled him, he felt a species of joy at the idea that it might perhaps be in his power to render such a service to her whom he loved. But what was he to do? should he warn the menaced persons? where was he to find them? for he did not know their address. They had reappeared to him momentarily, and then plunged again into the immense profundities of Paris. Should he wait for M. Leblanc at the gate at the moment when he arrived that evening and warn him of the snare? But Jondrette and his comrades would see him on the watch. The place was deserted, they would be stronger than he, they would find means to get him out of the way, and the man whom Marius wished to save would be lost. It had just struck one, and as the snare was laid for six o'clock, Marius had five hours before him. There was only one thing to be done; he put on

his best coat, tied a handkerchief round his neck, took his hat, and went out, making no more noise than if he were walking barefoot on moss; besides, the woman was still rummaging the old iron.

Once outside the house, he turned into the Rue du Petit Banquier. About the middle of the street he found himself near a very low wall, which it was possible to bestride in some places, and which surrounded unoccupied ground. He was walking slowly, deep in thought as he was, and the snow deadened his footsteps, when all at once he heard voices talking close to him. He turned his head, but the street was deserted; it was open day, and yet he distinctly heard the voices. He thought of looking over the wall, and really saw two men seated in the snow, and conversing in a low voice. They were strangers to him: one was a bearded man in a blouse, and the other a hairy man in rags. The bearded man wore a Greek cap, while the other was bareheaded, and had snow in his hair. By thrusting out his head over them Marius could hear the hairy man say to the other, with a nudge.

"With Patron Minette it cannot fail."

"Do you think so?" asked the bearded man, and the hairy man added,—

"It will be five hundred balls for each, and the worst that can happen is five years, six years, or ten at the most."

The other replied with some hesitation, and shuddering under his Greek cap,—

"That is a reality; and people must not go to meet things of that sort."

"I tell you that the affair cannot fail," the hairy man continued. "Father What's-his-name's trap will be all ready."

Then they began talking of a melo-drama which they had seen on the previous evening at the Gaité.

Marius walked on; but it seemed to him that the obscure remarks of these men, so strangely concealed behind this wall, and crouching in the snow, must have some connection with Jondrette's abominable scheme; that must be the *affair*. He went toward the Faubourg Saint Marceau, and asked at the first shop he came to where he could find a police commissary. He was told at No. 14, Rue de Pontoise, and he proceeded there. As he passed a baker's he bought a two-sous roll and ate it, as he foresaw that he should not dine. On the way he rendered justice to Providence. He thought that if he had not given the five francs in the morning to the girl he should have followed M. Leblanc's hackney coach, and consequently known nothing. There would, in that case, have been no obstacle to Jondrette's

ambuscade, and M. Leblanc would have been lost, and doubtless his daughter with him.

On reaching No. 14, Rue de Pontoise, he went up to the first floor and asked for the commissary.

"He is not in at present," said some clerk, "but there is an inspector to represent him. Will you speak to him? is your business pressing?"

"Yes," said Marius.

The clerk led him to the commissary's office. A very tall man was leaning here against the fender of a stove, and holding up with both hands the skirts of a mighty coat with three capes. He had a square face, thin and firm lips, thick greyish whiskers, and a look which seemed as if it was searching your pockets. Of this look you might have said, not that it pierced, but that it felt. This man did not appear much less ferocious or formidable than Jondrette; for sometimes it is just as dangerous to meet the dog as the wolf.

"What do you want?" he asked Marius, without adding sir.

"The police commissary."

"He is absent, but I represent him."

"It is a very secret affair."

"Then speak."

"And very urgent."

"In that case speak quick."

This man, who was calm and quick, was at once terrifying and reassuring. He inspired both fear and confidence. Marius told him of his adventure—that a person whom he only knew by sight was to be drawn that very evening into a trap—that he, Marius Pontmercy, barrister, residing in the next room to the den, had heard the whole plot through the partition—that the scoundrel's name who invented the snare was Jondrette—that he would have accomplices, probably prowlers at the barrières, among others one Panchaud, *alias* Printanier, *alias* Bigrenaille—that Jondrette's daughters would be on the watch—that there were no means of warning the threatened man, as not even his name was known—and that, lastly, all this would come off at six in the evening, at the most deserted spot on the Boulevard de l'Hôpital, in the house No. 50-52.

At this number the Inspector raised his head, and said coldly,—

"It must be in the room at the end of the passage."

"Exactly," Marius replied, and added, "do you know the house?"

The Inspector remained silent for a moment, and then an-

swered, while warming his boot-heel at the door of the stove,—

“Apparently so.”

He went on between his teeth, talking less to Marius than his cravat.

“Patron Minette must be mixed up in this.”

This remark struck Marius.

“Patron Minette!” he said, “yes, I heard that name mentioned.”

And he told the Inspector of the dialogue between the hairy man and the bearded man in the snow behind the wall in the Rue du Petit Banquier. The Inspector growled,—

“The hairy man must be Burgon, and the bearded man Demi-liard, *alias* Deux Milliards.”

He was again looking down and meditating. “As for Father What’s-his-name, I guess who he is. There, I have burnt my great coat, they always make too large a fire in these cursed stoves. No. 50-52, formerly the property of one Gorgeau.”

Then he looked at Marius.

“You only saw the hairy man and the bearded man?”

“And Panchaud.”

“You did not see a small dandy prowling about there?”

“No.”

“Nor a heavy lump of a fellow, resembling the elephant in the Jardin des Plantes?”

“No.”

“Nor a scamp, who looks like an old red-tail?”

“No.”

“As for the fourth, no one sees him, not even his pals and assistants. It is not surprising, therefore, that you did not perceive him.”

“No. Who are all these men?” Marius asked.

The Inspector continued, “Besides, it is not their hour.” He fell into silence, and presently added,—

“50-52. I know the tenement. It is impossible for us to hide ourselves in the interior without the actors perceiving us, and then they would escape by putting off the farce. They are so modest, and frightened at an audience. That won’t do, for I want to hear them sing and make them dance.”

This soliloquy ended, he turned to Marius, and asked, as he looked at him searchingly,—

“Would you be afraid?”

“Of what?” Marius asked.

“Of these men.”

"No more than I am of you," Marius answered roughly, for he was beginning to notice that this policeman had not yet said "Sir."

The Inspector looked at Marius more intently still, and continued, with a sort of sententious solemnity,—

"You speak like a brave man and like an honest man. Courage does not fear crime, nor honesty the authorities."

Marius interrupted him,—

"That is all very well, but what do you intend doing?"

The Inspector restricted himself to saying,—

"The lodgers in that house have latch-keys to let themselves in at night. You have one?"

"Yes," said Marius.

"Have you it about you?"

"Yes."

"Give it to me," the Inspector said.

Marius took the key out of his waistcoat pocket, handed it to the Inspector, and added,—

"If you take my advice you will bring a strong force."

The Inspector gave Marius such a glance as Voltaire would have given a Provincial Academician who proposed a rhyme to him; then he thrust both hands into his immense coat-pockets and produced two small steel pistols, of the sort called "knock-me-downs." He handed them to Marius, saying sharply and quickly,—

"Take these. Go home. Conceal yourself in your room, and let them suppose you out. They are loaded; both with two bullets. You will watch, as you tell me there is a hole in the wall. People will arrive; let them go on a little. When you fancy the matter ripe, and you think it time to stop it, you will fire a pistol, but not too soon. The rest concerns me. A shot in the air, in the ceiling, I don't care where,—but, mind, not too soon. Wait till they begin to put the screw on. You are a lawyer, and know what that means."

Marius took the pistols, and placed them in a side pocket of his coat.

"They bulge like that, and attract attention," said the Inspector; "put them in your trousers' pockets."

Marius did so.

"And now," the Inspector continued, "there is not a moment for any one to lose. What o'clock is it? Half-past two. You said seven?"

"Six o'clock," Marius corrected.

"I have time," the Inspector added; "but only just time. Do not forget anything I have said to you. A pistol-shot."

"All right," Marius replied.

And as he put his hand on the latch to leave the room the Inspector shouted to him,—

"By the way, if you should want me between this and then, come or send here. Ask for Inspector Javert."

CHAPTER LXIV.

JONDRLETTE MAKES HIS PURCHASE.

At about three o'clock Courfeyrac happened to pass along the Rue Mouffetard, accompanied by Bossuet. The snow was thicker than ever, and filled the air, and Bossuet had just said to Courfeyrac,—

"To see all these flakes of snow fall, we might say that the sky is suffering from a plague of white butterflies."

All at once Bossuet noticed Marius coming up the street toward the barrière with a peculiar look.

"Hilloh!" said Bossuet, "there's Marius."

"I saw him," said Courfeyrac; "but we won't speak to him."

"Why not?"

"He is busy."

"At what?"

"Do you not see that he looks as if he were following some one?"

"That is true," said Bossuet.

"Only see what eyes he makes!" Courfeyrac added.

"But whom the deuce is he following?"

"Some Mimi-Goton with flowers in her cap. He is in love."

"But," Bossuet observed, "I do not see any Mimi or any Goton, or any cap trimmed with flowers in the street. There is not a single woman."

Courfeyrac looked, and exclaimed, "He is following a man."

A man, wearing a cap, and whose grey beard could be distinguished, although his back was turned, was walking about twenty yards ahead of Marius. This man was dressed in a perfectly new great coat, which was too large for him, and a

frightful pair of ragged trousers, all black with mud. Bossuet burst into a laugh.

"Who can the man be?"

"That?" Courfeyrac replied, "oh, he is a poet. Poets are fond of wearing the trousers of rabbit-skin buyers and the coats of the Peers of France."

"Let us see where Marius is going," said Bossuet, "and where this man is going. Suppose we follow them, eh?"

"Bossuet!" Courfeyrac exclaimed, "Eagle of Meaux, you are a prodigious brute to think of following a man who is following a man."

They turned back. Marius had really seen Jondrette in the Rue Mouffetard, and was following him. Jondrette was walking along, not at all suspecting that an eye was already fixed upon him. He left the Rue Mouffetard, and Marius saw him enter one of the most hideous lodging-houses in the Rue Gracieuse, where he remained for about a quarter of an hour, and then returned to the Rue Mouffetard. He stopped at an ironmonger's shop, which was at that period at the corner of the Rue Pierre-Lombard; and a few minutes after Marius saw him come out of the shop, holding a large cold chisel set in a wooden handle, which he hid under his great coat. He then turned to his left and hurried toward the Rue du Petit Banquier. Day was drawing in, the snow, which had ceased for a moment, had begun again, and Marius concealed himself at the corner of the Rue du Petit Banquier, which was deserted as usual, and did not follow Jondrette. It was lucky that he acted thus, for Jondrette, on reaching the spot where Marius had listened to the conversation of the hairy man and the bearded man, looked round, made sure that he was not followed, clambered over the wall, and disappeared. The unused ground which this wall enclosed communicated with the back yard of a livery-stable-keeper of bad repute, who had been a bankrupt, and still had a few vehicles standing under sheds.

Marius thought it would be as well to take advantage of Jondrette's absence and return home. Besides, time was slipping away, and every evening Mame Bougon, when she went to wash up dishes in town, was accustomed to close the gate, and, as Marius had given his latch-key to the Inspector, it was important that he should be in time. Night had nearly set in along the whole horizon, and in the whole immensity there was only one point still illumined by the sun, and that was the moon, which was rising red behind the low dome of the Salpêtrière. Marius hurried to No. 50-52, and the gate was still open when he arrived. He went up the stairs on tip-

toe, and glided along the passage-wall to his room. This passage, it will be remembered, was bordered on either side by rooms which were now to let, and Mame Bougon, as a general rule, left the doors open. While passing one of these doors, Marius fancied that he could see in the uninhabited room four men's heads vaguely lit up by a remnant of day-light, which fell through a window. Marius did not attempt to see, as he did not wish to be seen himself; and he managed to re-enter his room noiselessly and unseen. It was high time, for, a moment after, he heard Mame Bougon going out, and the house-gate shutting.

Marius sat down on his bed: it might be about half-past five, and only half an hour separated him from what was about to happen. He heard his arteries beat as you hear the ticking of a clock in the darkness, and he thought of the double march which was taking place at this moment in the shadows,—crime advancing on one side, and justice coming up on the other. He was not frightened, but he could not think without a certain tremor of the things that were going to happen, like all those who are suddenly assailed by a surprising adventure. This whole day produced on him the effect of a dream, and in order not to believe himself the prey of a nightmare he was obliged to feel in his pockets the cold barrels of the pistols. It no longer snowed; the moon, now very bright, dissipated the mist, and its rays, mingled with the white reflection from the fallen snow, imparted a twilight appearance to the room. There was a light in Jondrette's room, and Marius could see the hole in the partition glowing with a ruddy brilliancy that appeared to him the colour of blood. It was evident that this light could not be produced by a candle. There was no movement in the den, no one stirred there, no one spoke, there was not a breath, the silence was chilling and profound, and had it not been for the light, Marius might have fancied himself close to a grave. He gently took off his boots, and thrust them under the bed. Several minutes elapsed, and then Marius heard the house-gate creaking on its hinges, a heavy quick step ran up the stairs, and along the passage, the hasp of the door was noisily raised,—it was Jondrette returned home. All at once several voices were raised, and it was plain that the whole family were at home. They were merely silent in the master's absence, like the whelps in the absence of the wolves.

"It is I," he said.

"Good evening, pappy," the girls yelped.

"Well?" the wife asked.

"All is well," Jondrette answered, "but I am cold as a

starved dog. That's right, I am glad to see that you are dressed, for it inspires confidence."

"All ready to go out."

"You will not forget anything that I told you? You will do it all right."

"Of course."

"Because—" Jondrette began, but did not complete the sentence.

Marius heard him lay something heavy on the table, probably the chisel which he had bought.

"Well," Jondrette continued, "have you been eating here?"

"Yes," said the mother, "I bought three large potatoes and some salt. I took advantage of the fire to roast them."

"Good," Jondrette remarked, "to-morrow you will dine with me; we will have a duck and trimmings, and you will feed like Charles the Tenth."

Then he added, lowering his voice,—

"The mousetrap is open, and the cats are here."

He again lowered his voice and said,—

"Put this in the fire."

Marius heard some charcoal bars stirred with a pair of iron pincers, or some steel instrument, and Jondrette ask,—

"Have you tallowed the hinges of the door, so that they may make no noise?"

"Yes," the mother answered.

"What o'clock is it?"

"Close on six. It has struck the half-hour at St Medard."

"Hang it!" said Jondrette, "the girls must go on the watch. Come here and listen to me."

There was a whispering, and then Jondrette's voice was again uplifted.

"Has Mame Bougon gone?"

"Yes," the mother answered.

"Are you sure there is nobody in the neighbour's room?"

"He has not come in all day, and you know that this is his dinner hour."

"Are you sure?"

"Quite."

"No matter," Jondrette added, "there is no harm in going to see whether he is in. Daughter, take the candle and go."

Marius fell on his hands and knees, and silently crawled under the bed; he had scarce done so ere he saw light through the cracks of his door.

"Papa," a voice exclaimed, "he is out."

He recognized the elder girl's voice.

"Have you been in his room?" the father asked.

"No," the girl replied, "but as his key is in his door he has gone out."

The father shouted,—

"Go in all the same."

The door opened, and Marius saw the girl come in, candle in hand. She was the same as in the morning, save that she was even more fearful in this light. She walked straight up to the bed, and Marius suffered a moment of intense anxiety, but there was a looking-glass hanging from a nail by the bedside, and it was to that she proceeded. She stood on tip-toe and looked at herself; a noise of iron being moved could be heard in the other room. She smoothed her hair with her hand, and smiled in the glass, while singing, in her cracked and sepulchral voice,—

"Nos amours ont duré toute une semaine,
Mais que du bonheur les instants sont courts,
S'adorer huit jours c'était bien la peine!
Le temps des amours devrait durer toujours!
Devrait durer toujours! devrait durer toujours."

Still Marius trembled, for he thought that she could not help hearing his breathing. She walked to the window and looked out, while saying aloud with the half insane look she had,—

"How ugly Paris is when it has put on a white sheet!"

She returned to the glass, and began taking a fresh look at herself, first full face and then three-quarters.

"Well?" asked the father, "what are you doing there?"

"I am looking under the bed and the furniture," she said, as she continued to smooth her hair; "but there is nobody."

"You she-devil," the father yelled. "Come here directly, and lose no time."

"Coming, coming," she said, "there's no time to do anything here."

Then she hummed,—

"Vous me quittez pour aller à la gloire,
Mon triste cœur suivra partout vos pas."

She took a parting glance at the glass and went off, closing the door after her. A moment later Marius heard the sound of the girls' naked feet pattering along the passage, and Jondrette's voice shouting to them,—

"Pay attention! one at the barrière and the other at the corner of the Rue du Petit Banquier. Do not lose the gate of this house out of sight, and if you see anything come back at once—at once—you have a key to let yourselves in."

The elder daughter grumbled,—

“To stand sentry barefooted in the snow, what a treat!”

“To-morrow you shall have beetle-coloured silk boots,” the father said.

They went down the stairs, and a few seconds later the sound of the gate closing below announced that they had reached the street. The only persons in the house now were Marius, the Jondrettes, and probably, too, the mysterious beings of whom Marius had caught a glimpse in the gloom behind the door of the unoccupied room.

CHAPTER LXV.

THE TWO CHAIRS.

MARIUS judged that the moment had arrived for him to return to his observatory. In a second, and with the agility of his age, he was at the hole in the partition, and peeped through. The interior of Jondrette's lodging offered a strange appearance, and Marius was able to account for the peculiar light he had noticed. A candle was burning in a verdigrised candlestick, but it was not this which really illumined the room; the whole den was lit up with the ruddy glow of a brasier standing in the fire-place, and filled with incandescent charcoal—it was the chafing-dish which the wife had prepared in the morning. The burner was red, a bluish flame played round it, and rendered it easy to recognize the shape of the chisel purchased by Jondrette, which was heating in the charcoal. In a corner, near the door, could be seen two heaps, one apparently of old iron, the other of ropes, arranged for some anticipated purpose. All this, to a person who did not know what was going to occur, would have made his mind vacillate between a very simple and a very sinister idea. The room, thus lit up, resembled a forge more than a mouth of Hades, but Jondrette, in this light, was more like a demon than a blacksmith.

The heat of the chafing-pan was so great that the candle on the table was melted and guttering on the side turned toward it. An old copper dark lantern, worthy of a Diogenes who had turned Cartouche, was standing on the mantel-piece. The chafing-dish, which stood in the fire-place, close to the decaying logs, sent its smoke up the chimney, and thus produced no

smell. The moon, which found its way through the skylight, poured its whiteness on the purple and flashing garret, and to the poetic mind of Marius, who was a dreamer even in the moment of action, it was like a thought of heaven mingled with the shapeless dreams of earth. A breath of air, that penetrated through the broken pane, also helped to dissipate the smell of charcoal and conceal the chafing-pan. Jondrette's den, if our readers remember what we have said about the house, was admirably selected to serve as the scene of a violent and dark deed, and as a covert for crime. It was the furthest room in the most isolated house on the most deserted Parisian boulevard; and if a snare were not there already it would have been invented there. The whole length of a house and a number of uninhabited rooms separated this lair from the boulevard, and the only window in it looked out on fields enclosed by walls and boardings. Jondrette had lit his pipe, was seated on the bottomless chair and smoking, and his wife was speaking to him in a low voice.

If Marius had been Courfeyrac, that is to say, one of those men who laugh at every opportunity, he would have burst into a roar when his eye fell on Mother Jondrette. She had on a bonnet with black feathers, like the hats worn by the heralds at the coronation of Charles X., an immense tartan shawl over her cotton skirt, and the man's shoes, which her daughter had disdained in the morning. It was this attire which drew from Jondrette the exclamation, "That's right, I am glad to see that you are dressed, for it inspires confidence." As for Jondrette, he had not taken off the new coat which M. Leblanc had given him, and his dress continued to offer that contrast between trousers and coat which constituted in Courfeyrac's sight the ideal of the poet. All at once Jondrette raised his voice.

"By the way, in such weather as this he will come in a hackney coach. Light your lamp and go down, and keep behind the front gate; when you hear the vehicle stop you will open the gate at once, light him up-stairs, and along the passage, and when he has come in here you will go down as quickly as you can, pay the coachman, and discharge him."

"Where's the money to come from?" the woman asked.

Jondrette felt in his pocket, and gave her five francs.

"What is this?" she exclaimed.

"The monarch which our neighbour gave us this morning," and he added, "we shall want two chairs, though."

"What for?"

"Why, to sit down."

Marius shuddered on hearing the woman make the quiet answer,—

“Well, I will go and fetch our neighbour’s.”

And with a rapid movement she opened the door and stepped into the passage. Marius had not really the time to get off the drawers and hide under his bed.

“Take the candle,” Jondrette shouted.

“No,” she said, “it would bother me, for I have two chairs to carry. Besides, the moon is shining.”

Marius heard the heavy hand of Mother Jondrette fumbling for his key in the darkness. The door opened, and he remained nailed to his post by alarm and stupor. The woman came in; the skylight sent a moon-beam between two large patches of shade, and one of these patches entirely covered the wall against which Marius was standing, so that he disappeared. Mother Jondrette did not see Marius, took the two chairs, the only two that Marius possessed, and went off, noisily slamming the door after her. She re-entered the den.

“Here are the two chairs.”

“And here is the lantern,” the husband said, “make haste down.”

He placed the chairs on either side of the table, turned the chisel in the chafing-dish, placed in front of the fire-place an old screen, which concealed the charcoal-pan, and then went to the corner where the heap of rope lay, and stooped down as if examining something. Marius then perceived that what he had taken for a shapeless heap was a rope ladder, very well made with wooden rungs, and two hooks to hang it by. This ladder and a few large tools, perfect crowbars, which were mingled with the heap of old iron in the corner, had not been there in the morning, and had evidently been brought in the afternoon, during the absence of Marius.

“They are locksmith’s tools,” Marius thought.

Had he been a little better acquainted with the trade he would have recognized, in what he took for tools, certain instruments that could force or pick a lock, and others that could cut or pierce, the two families of sinister tools which burglars call “cadets” and “fauchants.” The table and the two chairs were exactly opposite Marius, and, as the charcoal-pan was concealed, the room was only illumined by the candle, and the smallest article on the table or the chimney-piece cast a long shadow; a cracked water-jug hid half a wall. There was in this room a hideous and menacing calm, and an expectation of something awful could be felt. Jondrette had let his pipe go out, a sign

of deep thought, and had just sat down again. The candle caused the stern and fierce angles of his face to stand out; he was frowning, and suddenly thrust out his right hand now and then, as if answering the final counsels of a dark internal soliloquy. In one of the obscure replies he made to himself he opened the table drawer, took out a long carving-knife hidden in it, and felt its edge on his thumb nail. This done, he put the knife in the drawer, which he closed again. Marius, on his side, drew the pistol from his pocket, and cocked it, which produced a sharp, clicking sound. Jondrette started, and half rose from his chair.

"Who's that?" he shouted.

Marius held his breath. Jondrette listened for a moment, and then said, laughingly,—

"What an ass I am! it is the partition creaking."

Marius held the pistol in his hand.

At this moment the distant and melancholy vibration of a bell shook the windows; six o'clock was striking at St Medard's. Jondrette marked each stroke by a shake of the head, and when he had counted the last he snuffed the candle with his fingers. Then he began walking up and down the room, listened at the door, began walking again, and then listened once more. "I only hope he'll come," he growled, and then returned to his chair. He was hardly seated ere the door opened. Mother Jondrette had opened it, and remained in the passage making a horrible grimace, which one of the holes in the dark lantern lit up from below.

"Step in, sir," she said.

"Enter, my benefactor!" Jondrette repeated, as he hurriedly rose.

M. Leblanc appeared with that air of serenity which rendered him singularly venerable, and laid four louis on the table.

"Monsieur Fabantou, here is the money for your rent, and something more to put you a little straight. After that we will see."

"May Heaven repay you! my generous benefactor," said Jondrette, and then rapidly approached his wife.

"Dismiss the hackney coach."

She slipped away, while her husband made an infinitude of bows, and offered a chair to M. Leblanc. A moment after she returned, and whispered in his ear, "All right!"

The snow, which had not ceased to fall since morning, was now so thick that neither the arrival nor the departure of the coach had been heard. M. Leblanc had seated himself, and Jondrette now took possession of the chair opposite to him.

And now the reader, in order to form an idea of the scene which is about to be acted, will kindly imagine the freezing night, the solitudes of the Salpêtrière covered with snow, and white in the moonlight, like an immense winding-sheet, and the light of the lamps throwing a red glow here and there over these tragic boulevards, and the long rows of black elms: not a passer-by for a quarter of a league round, and the Maison Gorbeau at its highest point of solemn horror and night. In this house, amid this solitude and darkness, is Jondrette's spacious garret lit by a candle, and in this den two men are sitting at a table,—M. Leblanc calm, Jondrette smiling and terrible. Mother Jondrette, the she-wolf, is in a corner, and behind the partition, Marius, invisible, but not losing a word or a movement, with his eye on the watch, and pistols in hand. Marius, however, only felt an emotion of horror, but no fear: he clutched the butt of the pistol, and said to himself, feeling reassured, "I can stop the scoundrel whenever I like." He felt that the police were somewhere in ambush, waiting for the appointed signal, and all ready to extend their arms. In addition, he hoped that from this violent encounter between Jondrette and M. Leblanc some light would be thrown on all that he had an interest in knowing.

CHAPTER LXVI.

A PROPOSITION.

M. LEBLANC was scarce seated ere he turned his eyes to the beds, which were empty.

"How is the poor little wounded girl?" he asked.

"Very bad," Jondrette replied with a heart-broken and grateful smile. "Very bad, my good sir. Her elder sister has taken her to La Bourbe to have her hand dressed. But you will see them, as they will return almost immediately."

"Madame Fabantou seems to me better?" M. Leblanc continued, taking a glance at the strange garb of Mother Jondrette, who, standing between him and the door, as if already guarding the outlet, was looking at him in a menacing and almost combative posture.

"She is dying," Jondrette said, "but what would you have,

sir? that female has so much courage. She is not a female but an ox."

Mother Jondrette, affected by the compliment, protested with the affectation of a flattered monster,—

"You are always too kind to me, Monsieur Jondrette."

"Jondrette?" said M. Leblanc, "why, I thought your name was Fabantou."

"Fabantou *alias* Jondrette," the husband quickly replied, "a professional name."

And, giving his wife a shrug, which M. Leblanc did not see, he continued with an emphatic and caressing inflection of voice,—

"Ah! that poor dear and I have ever lived happily together, for what would be left us if we had not that! we are so wretched, respectable sir. I have arms but no labour, a heart but no work. I do not know how the Government manage it, but, on my word of honour, sir, I am no Jacobin, I wish them no harm, but if I were the ministers, on my most sacred word things would go differently. For instance, I wished my daughters to learn the trade of making paper boxes. You will say to me, 'What! a trade?' Yes, a trade, a simple trade, a bread-winner. What a fall, my benefactor! what degradation, after persons have been in such circumstances as we were, but, alas! nothing is left us from our prosperous days. Nothing but one article—a picture, to which I cling, but which I am ready to part with, as we must live."

While Jondrette was saying this with a sort of apparent disorder, which did not in any way alter the thoughtful and sagacious expression of his face, Marius raised his eyes and saw some one at the back of the room, whom he had not seen before. A man had just entered, but so softly that the hinges had not been heard to creak. This man had on an old worn-out, torn violet knitted jacket, wide cotton velvet trousers, thick socks on his feet, and no shirt; his neck was bare, his arms were naked and tattooed, and his face was daubed with black. He seated himself silently, and with folded arms, on the nearest bed, and, as he was behind Mother Jondrette, he could be but dimly distinguished. That sort of magnetic instinct which warns the eye caused M. Leblanc to turn almost at the same moment as Marius. He could not suppress a start of surprise, which Jondrette noticed.

"Ah, I see," Jondrette exclaimed, as he buttoned his coat complacently, "you are looking at your surtout? it fits me, really fits me capitally."

"Who is that man?" M. Leblanc asked.

"That?" said Jondrette, "oh, a neighbour; pay no attention to him."

The neighbour looked singular, but chemical factories abound in the Faubourg St Marceau, and a workman may easily have a black face. M. Leblanc's whole person displayed a confident and intrepid candour, as he continued,—

"I beg your pardon, but what were you saying, M. Fabantou?"

"I was saying, sir, and dear protector," Jondrette replied, as he placed his elbows on the table and gazed at M. Leblanc with fixed and tender eyes, very like those of a boa-constrictor, "I was saying that I had a picture to sell."

There was a slight noise at the door; a second man came in and seated himself on the bed behind Mother Jondrette. Like the first, he had bare arms and a mask, either of ink or soot. Though this man literally glided into the room he could not prevent M. Leblanc noticing him.

"Take no heed," said Jondrette, "they are men living in the house. I was saying that I had a valuable picture left; look here, sir."

He rose, walked to the wall, against which the panel to which we have already referred was leaning, and turned it round, while still letting it rest on the wall. It was something, in fact, that resembled a picture, and which the candle almost illumined. Marius could distinguish nothing, as Jondrette was standing between him and the picture, but he fancied he could catch a glimpse of a coarse daub, and a sort of principal character standing out of the canvas, with the bold crudity of a showman's pictures.

"What is that?" M. Leblanc asked.

Jondrette exclaimed,—

"A master-piece, a most valuable picture, my benefactor! I am as much attached to it as I am to my daughters, for it recalls dear memories; but, as I told you, and I will not go back from my word, I am willing to dispose of it, as we are in such poverty."

Either by accident, or some vague feeling of anxiety, M. Leblanc's eye, while examining the picture, returned to the end of the room. There were now four men there, three seated on the bed and one leaning against the door-post, but all four bare-armed, motionless, and with blackened faces. One of those on the bed was leaning against the wall with closed eyes and apparently asleep; this one was old, and the white hair on the blackened face was horrible. The other two were young, one was hairy, the other bearded. Not a single one had shoes,

and those who did not wear socks were barefooted. Jondrette remarked that M. Leblanc's eyes rested on these men.

"They are friends, neighbours," he said, "their faces are black because they are chimney-sweeps. Do not trouble yourself about them, sir, but buy my picture. Have pity on my misery. I will not ask much for it; what value do you set upon it?"

"Well," M. Leblanc said, looking Jondrette full in the face, like a man setting himself on guard, "it is some pot-house sign, and worth about three francs."

Jondrette replied gently,—

"Have you your pocket-book about you? I shall be satisfied with a thousand crowns."

M. Leblanc rose, set his back against the wall, and took a hurried glance round the room. He had Jondrette on his left by the window, and on his right the woman and the four men by the door. The four men did not stir, and did not even appear to see him. Jondrette had begun talking again with a plaintive accent, and with such a wandering eye that M. Leblanc might fairly believe that he simply had before him a man driven mad by misery.

"If you do not buy my picture, dear benefactor," Jondrette said, "I have no resource remaining, and nothing is left me but to throw myself into the river. When I think that I wished my two daughters to learn how to make paper boxes for new-year's gifts. Well, for that you require a table with a backboard to prevent the glasses falling on the ground, a stove made expressly, a pot with three compartments for the three different degrees of strength which the glue must have, according as it is used for wood, paper, and cloth; a board to cut pasteboard on, a hammer, a pair of pincers, and the deuce knows what, and all that to gain four sous a day! and you must work fourteen hours! and each box passes thirteen times through the hands of the work-girl! and moistening the paper! and not spoiling anything! and keeping the glue hot! the devil! I tell you, four sous a day! How do you expect them to live?"

While speaking, Jondrette did not look at M. Leblanc, who was watching him. M. Leblanc's eye was fixed on Jondrette, and Jondrette's on the door, while Marius' gasping attention went from one to the other. M. Leblanc seemed to be asking himself, Is he a lunatic? and Jondrette repeated twice or thrice with all sorts of varied inflections in the suppliant style, "All that is left me is to throw myself into the river! the other day I went for that purpose down three steps by the side of the bridge of Austerlitz." All at once his eyes glistened

with a hideous radiance, the little man drew himself up and became frightful, he walked a step toward M. Leblanc, and shouted, in a thundering voice,—

“That is not the point! Do you recognize me?”

CHAPTER LXVII.

CAUGHT IN A TRAP.

THE attic door was torn open, and three men in blue cloth blouses and wearing masks of black paper came in. The first was thin, and carried an iron-shod cudgel; the second, who was a species of Colossus, held a pole-axe by the middle, while the third, a broad-shouldered fellow, not so thin as the first, but not stout as the second, was armed with an enormous key stolen from some prison-gate. It seemed as if Jondrette had been awaiting the arrival of these men, and a hurried conversation took place between him and the man with the cudgel.

“Is all ready?” asked Jondrette.

“Yes,” the thin man replied.

“Where is Montparnasse?”

“He’s stopped to talk to your eldest daughter.”

“Is the trap ready?”

“Yes.”

“With two good horses?”

“Excellent.”

“Is it waiting where I ordered?”

“Yes.”

“All right,” said Jondrette.

M. Leblanc was very pale. He looked all round the room like a man who understands into what a snare he has fallen, and his head, turned toward all the heads that surrounded him, moved on his neck with an attentive and surprised slowness, but there was nothing in his appearance that resembled fear. He had formed an improvised bulwark of the table, and this man, who a moment before merely looked like an old man, had suddenly become an athlete, and laid his robust fist on the back of his chair with a formidable and surprising gesture. This old man, so firm and brave in the presence of such a danger, seemed to possess one of those natures which are courageous in the same way as they are good—easily and simply. The father of a woman

we love is never a stranger to us, and Marius felt proud of this unknown man.

Three of the men whom Jondrette called chimney-sweepers had taken from the mass of iron, one a large chisel, another a pair of heavy pincers, and the third a hammer, and posted themselves in front of the door, without saying a word. The old man remained on the bed, merely opening his eyes, and Mother Jondrette was sitting by his side. Marius thought that the moment for interference was at hand, and raised his right hand to the ceiling in the direction of the passage, ready to fire his pistol. Jondrette, after finishing his colloquy with the three men, turned again to M. Leblanc, and repeated the question, with that low, restrained, and terrible laugh of his,—

“Do you not recognize me?”

M. Leblanc looked him in the face and answered, “No!”

Jondrette then went up to the table, he bent over the candle with folded arms, and placed his angular and ferocious face as close as he could to M. Leblanc's placid face, and in this posture of a wild beast which is going to bite, he exclaimed,—

“My name is not Fabantou or Jondrette, but my name is Thénardier, the landlord of the inn at Montfermeil! Do you hear me? Thénardier. Now do you recognize me?”

An almost imperceptible flush shot athwart M. Leblanc's forehead, and he answered, with his ordinary placidity, and without the slightest tremor in his voice,—

“No more than before.”

Marius did not hear this answer, and any one who had seen him at this moment in the darkness would have found him haggard, stunned, and crushed. At the moment when Jondrette said, *My name is Thénardier*, Marius trembled in all his limbs, and he leant against the wall, as if he felt a cold sword-blade thrust through his heart. Then his right hand, raised in readiness to fire, slowly dropped, and at the moment when Jondrette repeated, *Do you hear me, Thénardier?* Marius' relaxing fingers almost let the pistol fall. Jondrette, by revealing who he was, did not affect M. Leblanc, but he stunned Marius, for he knew this name of Thénardier, which was apparently unknown to M. Leblanc. Only remember what that name was for him! He had carried it in his heart, recorded in his father's will! he bore it in the deepest shrine of his memory in the sacred recommendation,—“A man of the name of Thénardier saved my life; if my son meet this man he will do all he can for him.” This name, it will be remembered, was one of the pieties of his soul, and he blended it with his father's

name in his worship. What! This man was Thénardier, the landlord of Montfermeil, whom he had so long and so vainly sought! He found him now, and in what a state! His father's saviour was a bandit! this man, to whom Marius burned to devote himself, was a monster! the liberator of Colonel Pontmercy was on the point of committing a crime, whose outline Marius could not yet see very distinctly, but which resembled an assassination! And on whom? Great Heaven, what a fatality, what a bitter mockery of fate! His father commanded him from his tomb to do all in his power for Thénardier. During four years Marius had had no other idea but to pay this debt of his father's, and at the very moment when he was about to deliver over to justice a brigand, in the act of crime, destiny cried to him, "It is Thénardier!" and he was at length about to requite this man, for saving his father's life amid a hail-storm of grape-shot on the heroic field of Waterloo, by sending him to the scaffold! He had vowed that, if ever he found this Thénardier, he would throw himself at his feet, and he had found him, but for the purpose of handing him over to the executioner! His father said to him, "Help Thénardier," and he was about to answer that adored and sacred voice by crushing Thénardier! To show his father in his grave the spectacle of the man who had dragged him from death, at the peril of his own life, being executed on the Place St Jacques, by the agency of his son, that Marius to whom he bequeathed this name! And then what a derision it was to have so long carried in his heart the last wishes of his father, in order to perform exactly the contrary! But, on the other hand, how could he witness a murder, and not prevent it? What, should he condemn the victim and spare the assassin? could he be bound by any ties of gratitude to such a villain? All the ideas which Marius had entertained for four years were, as it were, run through the body by this unexpected stroke. He trembled, all depended on him, and he held in his hands the unconscious beings who were moving before his eyes. If he fired the pistol, M. Leblanc was saved and Thénardier lost; if he did not fire, M. Leblanc was sacrificed and Thénardier might, perhaps, escape. Must he hunt down the one, or let the other fall? there was remorse on either side. What should he do? which should he choose? be a defaulter to the most imperious recollections, to so many profound pledges taken to himself, to the most sacred duty, to the most venerated commands, disobey his father's will, or let a crime be accomplished? On one side he fancied he could hear "his Ursule" imploring him for her father, on the other the Colonel recommending Thénardier to him. He felt as

if he were going mad. His knees gave way under him, and he had not even time to deliberate, as the scene he had before him was being performed with such furious precipitation. It was a tornado of which he had fancied himself the master, but which was carrying him away: he was on the verge of fainting.

In the mean while Thénardier (we will not call him otherwise in future) was walking up and down before the table, with a sort of wild and frenzied triumph. He seized the candle-stick and placed it on the chimney-piece with such a violent blow that the candle nearly went out, and the tallow spattered the wall. Then he turned round furiously to M. Leblanc and spat forth these words.

"Done brown! grilled, fricasseed! spatch-cocked!"

And he began walking again with a tremendous explosion.

"Ah! I have found you again, my excellent philanthropist! my millionaire with the thread-bare coat! the giver of dolls! the old niggard! Ah, you do not recognize me. I suppose it wasn't you who came to my inn at Montfermeil just eight years ago, on the Christmas night of 1823! it wasn't you who carried off Fantine's child, the Lark! it wasn't you who wore a yellow watchman's coat, and had a parcel of clothes in your hand, just as you had this morning. Tell me, wife! It is his mania, it appears, to carry to houses bundles of woollen stockings, the old charitable humbug! Are you a cap-maker, my Lord millionaire! you give your profits to the poor, what a holy man! what a mountebank! Ah, you do not recognize me! well, I recognize you, and did so directly you thrust your muzzle in here. Ah, you will be taught that it is not a rosy game to go like that to people's houses, under the excuse that they are inns, with such a wretched coat and poverty-stricken look that they feel inclined to give you a sou, and then, to play the generous, rob them of their bread-winner, and threaten them in the woods. I'll teach you that you won't get off, by bringing people when they are ruined a coat that is too large and two paltry hospital blankets, you old scamp, you child-stealer!"

He stopped, and for a moment seemed to be speaking to himself. It appeared as if his fury fell into some hole, like the Rhone: then, as if finishing aloud the things he had just been saying to himself, he struck the table with his fist, and cried,—

"With his simple look!"

Then he apostrophized M. Leblanc.

"By heaven! you made a fool of me formerly, and are the cause of all my misfortunes. You got for fifteen hundred

francs a girl who certainly belonged to rich parents, who had already brought me in a deal of money, and from whom I should have got an annuity! That girl would have made up to me all I lost in that wretched pot-house, where I threw away like an ass all my blessed savings! Oh I wish that what was drunk at my house were poison to those who drank it! However, no matter! Tell me, I suppose you thought me a precious fool when you went off with the Lark. You had your cudgel in the forest, and were the stronger. To-day I shall have my revenge, for I hold all the trumps; you are done, my good fellow. Oh! how I laugh when I think that he fell into the trap! I told him that I was an actor, that my name was Fabantou, that I had played with Mamselle Mara, and that my landlord insisted on being paid the next day, and he did not even remember that Jan. 8th and not Feb. 4th is quarter-day. The absurd idiot! and these four paltry philips he has brought me! the ass! He had not the pluck to go as far as five hundred francs; and how he swallowed my platitudes! it amused me, and I said to myself, There's an ass for you! Well, I have got you; this morning I licked your paws, and to-night I shall gnaw your heart!"

Thénardier stopped out of breath; his little narrow chest panted like a forge-bellows. His eye was full of the ignoble happiness of a weak, cruel, and cowardly creature who is at length able to trample on the man he feared, and insult him whom he flattered; it is the joy of a dwarf putting his heel on the head of Goliath, the joy of a jackal beginning to rend a sick bull, which is unable to defend itself, but still has sufficient vitality to suffer. M. Leblanc did not interrupt him, but said, when he ceased speaking,—

"I do not know what you mean, and you are mistaken. I am a very poor man, and anything but a millionaire. I do not know you, and you take me for somebody else."

"Ah!" Thénardier said hoarsely, "a fine dodge! So you adhere to that joke, eh, old fellow? Ah, you do not remember, you do not see who I am!"

"Pardon me, sir," M. Leblanc replied, with a polite accent, which had something strange and grand about it at such a moment, "I see that you are a bandit."

We may remind those who have not noticed the fact, that odious beings possess a susceptibility, and that monsters are ticklish. At the word 'bandit,' Mother Thénardier leaped from the bed, and her husband clutched a chair as if about to break it in his hand. "Don't stir, you," he shouted to his wife, and then turning to M. Leblanc, said,—

"Bandit! yes, I know that you rich swells call us so. It is true that I have been bankrupt. I am in hiding, I have no bread, I have not a farthing, and I am a bandit! For three days I have eaten nothing, and I am a bandit! ah, you fellows warm your toes, you wear pumps made by Sakoski, you have wadded coats like Archbishops, you live on the first floors of houses where a porter is kept, you eat truffles, asparagus at forty francs the bundle in January, and green peas. You stuff yourselves, and when you want to know whether it is cold you look in the newspaper to see what Chevalier's thermometer marks; but we are the thermometers. We have no call to go and look at the corner of the Jour d'Horloge how many degrees of cold there are, for we feel the blood stopped in our veins, and the ice reach our hearts, and we say, 'There is no God!' and you come into our caverns, yes, our caverns, to call us bandits! But we will eat you, we will devour you, poor little chap! Monsieur le millionnaire, learn this: I was an established man, I held a license, I was an elector, and am still a citizen, while you, perhaps, are not one!"

Here Thénardier advanced a step toward the men near the door, and added with a quiver,—

"When I think that he dares to come and address me like a cobbler."

Then he turned upon M. Leblanc with a fresh outburst of frenzy,—

"And know this, too, my worthy philanthropist, I am not a doubtful man, or one whose name is unknown, and carries off children from houses! I am an ex-French soldier, and ought to have the cross! I was at Waterloo, and in the battle I saved the life of a General called the Comte de Pontmercy! The picture you see here, and which was painted by David at Bruqueselles, do you know whom it represents? it represents me, for David wished to immortalize the exploit. I have the General on my back, and I am carrying him through the grape-shot. That is the story! the General never did anything for me, and he is no better than the rest, but, for all that, I saved his life at the peril of my own, and I have my pockets filled with certificates of the fact. I am a soldier of Waterloo, a thousand names of names! And now that I have had the goodness to tell you all this, let us come to a finish; I want money, I want a deal of money, an enormous amount of money, or I shall exterminate you, by the thunder of heaven."

Marius had gained a little mastery over his agony, and was listening. The last possibility of doubt had vanished, and it was really the Thénardier of the will. Marius shuddered at the

charge of ingratitude cast at his father, and which he was on the point of justifying so fatally, and his perplexities were redoubled. Besides, there was in Thénardier's every word, in his accent and gestures, in his glance, which caused flames to issue from every word, in this explosion of an evil nature displaying everything, in this admixture of boasting and abjectness, pride and meanness, rage and folly, in this chaos of real griefs and false sentiments, in this impudence of a wicked man enjoying the pleasure of violence, in this daring nudity of an ugly soul, and in this conflagration of all possible suffering combined with all possible hatred, something which was hideous as evil and poignant as truth.

The master-piece, the picture by David, which he offered M. Leblanc, was, as the reader will have perceived, nought else than his public-house sign, painted by himself, and the sole relic he had preserved from his shipwreck at Montfermeil. As he had stepped aside Marius was now enabled to look at this thing, and in the daub he really recognized a battle, a background of smoke, and one man carrying another. It was the group of Thénardier and Pontmercy; the saviour sergeant and the saved colonel. Marius felt as if intoxicated, for this picture represented to some extent his loving father; it was no longer an inn sign-board but a resurrection; a tomb opened, a phantom rose. Marius heard his heart beating at his temples; he had the guns of Waterloo in his ears; his bleeding father vaguely painted on this ill-omened board startled him, and he fancied that the shapeless figure was gazing fixedly at him. When Thénardier regained breath he fastened his blood-shot eyes on M. Leblanc, and said to him in a low, sharp voice,—

"What have you to say before we put the handcuffs on you?"

M. Leblanc was silent. In the midst of this silence a rosy voice uttered this mournful sarcasm in the passage,—

"If there's any wood to be chopped, I'm your man."

It was the fellow with the pole-axe amusing himself. At the same time an immense, hairy, earth-coloured face appeared in the door with a frightful grin, which displayed not teeth but tusks. It was the face of the man with the pole-axe.

"Why have you taken off your mask?" Thénardier asked him furiously.

"To laugh," the man answered.

For some minutes past M. Leblanc seemed to be watching and following every movement of Thénardier, who, blinded and dazzled by his own rage, was walking up and down the room, in the confidence of knowing the door guarded, of holding an

unarmed man, and of being nine against one, even supposing that his wife only counted for one man. In his speech to the man with the pole-axe he turned his back to M. Leblanc; the latter took advantage of the opportunity, upset the chair with his foot, the table with his fist, and with one bound, ere Thénardier was able to turn, he was at the window. To open it and bstride the sill only took a second, and he was half out when six powerful hands seized him and energetically dragged him back into the room. The three "chimney-sweeps" had rushed upon him, and at the same time Mother Thénardier seized him by the hair. At the noise which ensued the other bandits ran in from the passage, and the old man on the bed, who seemed the worse for liquor, came up tottering with a road-mender's hammer in his hand. One of the sweeps, whose blackened face the candle lit up, and in whom Marius recognized, in spite of the blackening, Panchaud *alias* Printanier *alias* Bigrenaille, raised above M. Leblanc's head a species of life-preserver, made of two lumps of lead at the ends of an iron bar. Marius could not resist this sight. "My father," he thought, "forgive me!" and his finger sought the trigger. He was on the point of firing, when Thénardier cried,—

"Do not hurt him."

This desperate attempt of the victim, far from exasperating Thénardier, had calmed him. There were two men in him, the ferocious man and the skilful man. Up to this moment, in the exuberance of triumph, and while standing before his motionless victim, the ferocious man had prevailed, but when the victim made an effort and appeared inclined to struggle, the skilful man reappeared and took the mastery.

"Do him no harm!" he repeated, and his first service was, though he little suspected it, that he stopped the discharge of the pistol, and paralysed Marius, to whom the affair did not appear so urgent, and who in the presence of this new phase saw no harm in waiting a little longer. Who knew whether some accident might not occur, which would deliver him from the frightful alternative of letting Ursule's father perish, or destroying the Colonel's saviour? A herculean struggle had commenced. With one blow of his fist in the chest M. Leblanc sent the old man rolling in the middle of the room, and then with two back-handers knocked down two other assailants, and held one under each of his knees. The villains groaned under this pressure as under a granite mill-stone, but the four others had seized the formidable old man by the arms and neck, and were holding him down upon the two "sweeps." Thus, master of

two, and mastered by the others, crushing those beneath him, and crushed by those above him, M. Leblanc disappeared beneath this horrible group of bandits, like a boar attacked by a howling pack of dogs. They succeeded in throwing him on to the bed nearest the window, and held him down. Mother Thénardier did not once let go his hair.

"Don't you interfere," Thénardier said to her, "you will tear your shawl."

The woman obeyed, as the she-wolf obeys the wolf, with a snarl.

"You fellows," Thénardier continued, "can search him."

M. Leblanc appeared to have given up all thought of resistance, and they searched him. He had nothing about him but a leathern purse containing six francs and his handkerchief. Thénardier put the latter in his own pocket.

"What! no pocket-book?" he asked.

"No, and no watch," one of the sweeps replied.

"No matter," the masked man who held the large key muttered in the voice of a ventriloquist, "he is a tough old bird."

Thénardier went to the corner near the door, and took up some ropes, which he threw to them.

"Fasten him to the foot of the bed," he said, and noticing the old man whom M. Leblanc had knocked down still motionless on the floor, he asked,—

"Is Boulatruelle dead?"

"No," Bigrenaille answered, "he's drunk."

"Sweep him into a corner," Thénardier said.

Two of the sweeps thrust the drunkard with their feet to the side of the old iron.

"Babet, why did you bring so many?" Thénardier said in a whisper to the man with the cudgel, "it was unnecessary."

"They all wanted to be in it," the man answered, "for the season is bad, and there's nothing doing."

The bed upon which M. Leblanc had been thrown was a sort of hospital bed, on four clumsy wooden legs. The bandits tied him firmly in an upright posture to the end of the bed, furthest from the window and nearest the chimney-piece. When the last knot was tied Thénardier took a chair and sat down almost facing the prisoner. He was no longer the same man; in a few minutes his countenance had passed from frenzied violence to tranquil and cunning gentleness. Marius had a difficulty in recognizing in this polite smile of an official the almost bestial mouth which had been foaming a moment previously; he regarded this fantastic and alarming metamor-

phosis with stupor, and he felt as a man would feel who saw a tiger changed into an attorney.

"Sir," said Thénardier, and made a sign to the bandits who still held M. Leblanc to fall back; "leave me to talk with the gentleman," he said. All withdrew to the door, and he resumed,—

"You did wrong to try and jump out of the window, for you might have broken a leg. Now, with your permission, we will talk quietly; and, in the first place, I will communicate to you a thing I have noticed, that you have not yet uttered the slightest cry."

Thénardier was right, the fact was so, although it had escaped Marius in his trouble. M. Leblanc had merely said a few words without raising his voice, and even in his struggle near the window with the six bandits he had preserved the profoundest and most singular silence. Thénardier went on,—

"Good heavens! you might have tried to call for help, and I should not have thought it improper. Such a thing as Murder! is shouted on such occasions; I should not have taken it in ill-part. It is very simple that a man should make a bit of a row when he finds himself with persons who do not inspire him with sufficient confidence. If you had done so we should not have interfered with you or thought of gagging you, and I will tell you the reason why. This room is very deaf, it has only that in its favour, but it has that. It is a cellar, you might explode a bombshell here and it would not produce the effect of a drunkard's snore at the nearest post. Here cannon would go boum, and thunder pouf. It is a convenient lodging. But still you did not cry out; all the better, and I compliment you on it, and will tell you what conclusion I draw from the fact. My dear sir, when a man cries for help, who come? the police; and after the police? justice. Well, you did not cry out, and so you are no more desirous than we are for the arrival of the police. The fact is—and I have suspected it for some time—that you have some interest in hiding something; for our part, we have the same interest, and so we may be able to come to an understanding."

While saying this Thénardier was trying to drive the sharp points that issued from his eyes into his prisoner's conscience. Besides, his language, marked with a sort of moderate and cunning insolence, was reserved and almost chosen, and in this villain who was just before only a bandit could now be seen "the man who had studied for the priesthood." The silence which the prisoner had maintained, this precaution which went

so far as the very forgetfulness of care for his life, this resistance so opposed to the first movement of nature, which is to utter a cry, troubled and painfully amazed Marius, so soon as his attention was drawn to it. Thénardier's well-founded remark but rendered denser the mysterious gloom behind which was concealed the grave and peculiar face, to which Courfeyrac had thrown the sobriquet of M. Leblanc. But whoever this man might be, though bound with cords, surrounded by bandits, and half buried, so to speak, in a grave where the earth fell upon him at every step—whether in the presence of Thénardier furious or of Thénardier gentle—he remained impassive, and Marius could not refrain from admiring this face so superbly melancholy at such a moment. His was evidently a soul inaccessible to terror, and ignorant of what it is to be alarmed. He was one of those men who overcome the amazement produced by desperate situations. However extreme the crisis might be, however inevitable the catastrophe, he had none of the agony of the drowning man, who opens horrible eyes under water. Thénardier rose without any affectation, removed the screen from before the fire-place, and thus unmasked the chafing-pan full of burning charcoal, in which the prisoner could perfectly see the chisel at a white heat, and studded here and there with small red stars. Then he came back and sat down near M. Leblanc.

"I will continue," he said, "we can come to an understanding, so let us settle this amicably. I did wrong to let my temper carry me away just now, I do not know where my senses were, I went much too far and uttered absurdities. For instance, because you are a millionaire, I told you that I insisted on money, a great deal of money, an immense sum of money, and that was not reasonable. Good heavens! you may be rich, but you have burthens, for who is there that has not? I do not wish to ruin you, for I am not a bailiff after all. I am not one of those men who, because they have advantage of position, employ it to be ridiculous. Come, I will make a sacrifice on my side, and be satisfied with two hundred thousand francs."

M. Leblanc did not utter a syllable, and so Thénardier continued,—

"You see that I put plenty of water in my wine. I do not know the amount of your fortune, but I am aware that you do not care for money, and a benevolent man like you can easily give two hundred thousand francs to an unfortunate parent. Of course, you are reasonable too, you cannot have supposed that I would take all that trouble this morning, and organize

this affair to-night, which is a well-done job, in the opinion of these gentlemen, merely to ask you for enough money to go and drink fifteen sous wine and eat veal at Desnoyer's. But two hundred thousand francs, that's worth the trouble; once that trifle has come out of your pocket I will guarantee that you have nothing more to apprehend. You will say, 'But I have not two hundred thousand francs about me.' Oh, I am not exorbitant, and I do not insist on that. I only ask one thing of you: be good enough to write what I shall dictate."

Here Thénardier stopped, but added, laying a stress on the words and casting a smile at the chafing-dish,—

"I warn you that I shall not accept the excuse that you cannot write."

A Grand Inquisitor might have envied that smile. Thénardier pushed the table close up to M. Leblanc, and took pen, ink, and paper out of the drawer, which he left half open, and in which the long knife-blade flashed. He laid the sheet of paper before M. Leblanc.

"Write!" he said.

The prisoner at last spoke.

"How can you expect me to write? my arms are tied."

"That is true, I beg your pardon," said Thénardier, "you are quite right;" and turning to Bigrenaille, he added, "Unfasten the gentleman's right arm."

Panchaud *alias* Printanier *alias* Bigrenaille obeyed Thénardier's orders, and when the prisoner's hand was free, Thénardier dipped the pen in the ink and handed it to him.

"Make up your mind, sir, that you are in our absolute power, no human interference can liberate you, and we should really be sorry to be forced to proceed to disagreeable extremities. I know neither your name nor your address, but I warn you that you will remain tied up here until the person commissioned to deliver the letter you are going to write has returned. Now be good enough to write."

"What?" the prisoner asked.

Thénardier began dictating: "My dear daughter."

The prisoner started, and raised his eyes to Thénardier, who went on,—

"Come to me at once, for I want you particularly. The person who delivers this letter to you has instructions to bring you to me. I am waiting. Come in perfect confidence."

M. Leblanc wrote this down, and Thénardier resumed,—
"By the way, efface that '*Come in perfect confidence*,' for it might lead to a supposition that the affair is not perfectly simple, and create distrust."

M. Leblanc erased the words.

"Now," Thénardier added, "sign it. What is your name?"

The prisoner laid down the pen, and asked,—

"For whom is this letter?"

"You know very well," Thénardier answered; "for the little one, I just told you so."

It was evident that Thénardier avoided mentioning the name of the girl in question: he called her "the Lark," he called her "the little one," but he did not pronounce her name. It was the precaution of a clever man who keeps his secret from his accomplices, and mentioning the name would have told them the whole affair, and taught them more than there was any occasion for them to know. So he repeated,—

"Sign it. What is your name?"

"Urbain Fabre," said the prisoner.

Thénardier, with the movement of a cat, thrust his hand into his pocket and drew out the handkerchief found on M. Leblanc. He sought for the mark, and held it to the candle.

"U. F., all right, Urbain Fabre. Well, sign it U. F."

The prisoner did so.

"As two hands are needed to fold a letter, give it to me and I will do so."

This done, Thénardier added,—

"Write the address, to *Mademoiselle Fabre*, at your house. I know that you live somewhere near here in the neighbourhood of St Jacques du Haut-pas, as you attend Mass there every day, but I do not know in what street. I see that you understand your situation, and as you have not told a falsehood about your name you will not do so about your address. Write it yourself."

The prisoner remained pensive for a moment, and then took up the pen and wrote,—

"*Mademoiselle Fabre*, at M. Urbain Fabre's, No. 17, Rue St Dominique d'Enfer."

Thénardier seized the letter with a sort of feverish convulsion.

"Wife," he shouted, and the woman came up. "Here is the letter, and you know what you have to do. There is a hackney coach down below, so be off at once, and return ditto." Then he turned to the man with the pole-axe, and said, "As you have taken off your false nose you can accompany her. Get up behind the coach. You know where you left it?"

"Yes," said the man, and depositing the axe in a corner, he followed the woman. As they were going away Thénardier

thrust his head out of the door and shouted down the passage,—

“Mind and do not lose the letter! Remember you have two hundred thousand francs about you.”

The woman’s hoarse voice replied,—

“Don’t be frightened, I have put it in my stomach.”

A minute had not elapsed when the crack of a whip could be heard rapidly retiring.

“All right,” Thénardier growled, “they are going at a good pace; with a gallop like that she will be back in three quarters of an hour.”

He drew up a chair to the fire-side, and sat down with folded arms, and holding his muddy boots to the chafing-dish.

“My feet are cold,” he said.

Only five bandits remained in the den with Thénardier and the prisoner. These men, through the masks or soot that covered their faces and rendered them, with a choice of horror, charcoal-burners, negroes, or demons, had a heavy, dull look, and it was plain that they performed a crime like a job, tranquilly, without passion or pity, and with a sort of fatigue. They were heaped up in a corner like brutes, and were silent. Thénardier was warming his feet, and the prisoner had fallen back into his taciturnity; a sinister calmness had succeeded the formidable noise which had filled the garret a few moments previously. The candle, on which a large mushroom had formed, scarce lit up the immense room; the chafing-dish had grown black, and all these monstrous heads cast mis-shapen shadows upon the walls and the ceiling. No other sound was audible save the regular breathing of the old drunkard, who was asleep. Marius was waiting in a state of anxiety, which everything tended to augment. The enigma was more impenetrable than ever; who was this “little one,” whom Thénardier had also called “the Lark,”—was she “his Ursule?” The prisoner had not seemed affected by this name of the Lark, and had answered with the most natural air in the world, “I do not know what you mean.” On the other hand, the two letters U. F. were explained, they were Urbain Fabre, and Ursule’s name was no longer Ursule. This is what Marius saw most clearly. A sort of frightful fascination kept him nailed to the spot, whence he surveyed and commanded the whole scene. He stood there almost incapable of reflection and movement, as if annihilated by the frightful things which he saw close to him; and he waited, hoping for some incident, no matter its nature, unable to collect his thoughts, and not knowing what to do.

“In any case,” he said, “if she is the Lark, I shall see her,

for Mother Thénardier will bring her here. In that case I will give my life and blood, should it be necessary, to save her, and nothing shall stop me."

Nearly half an hour passed in this way; Thénardier seemed absorbed in dark thoughts, and the prisoner did not stir. Still Marius fancied that he could hear at intervals a low, dull sound in the direction of the prisoner. All at once Thénardier addressed his victim.

"By the way, M. Fabre," he said, "I may as well tell you something at once."

As these few words seemed the commencement of an explanation, Marius listened carefully. Thénardier continued,—

"My wife will be back soon, so do not be impatient. I believe that the Lark is really your daughter, and think it very simple that you should keep her, but listen to me for a moment. My wife will go to her with your letter, and I told Madame Thénardier to dress herself in the way you saw, that your young lady might make no difficulty about following her. They will both get into the hackney coach with my comrade behind; near a certain barrier there is a trap drawn by two excellent horses; your young lady will be driven up to it in the hackney coach, and get into the trap with my pal, while my wife returns here to report progress. As for your young lady, no harm will be done her; she will be taken to a place where she will be all safe, and so soon as you have handed me the trifle of two hundred thousand francs she will be restored to you. If you have me arrested my pal will settle the Lark, that's all."

The prisoner did not utter a word, and after a pause Thénardier continued,—

"It is simple enough, as you see, and there will be no harm, unless you like to make harm. I have told you all about it, and warned you, that you might know."

He stopped, but the prisoner did not interrupt the silence, and Thénardier added,—

"So soon as my wife has returned and said to me, 'The Lark is under weigh,' we will release you, and you can sleep at home if you like. You see that we have no ill intentions."

Frightful images passed across the mind of Marius. What! they were not going to bring the girl here! One of the monsters was going to carry her off in the darkness! where—? Oh, if it were she! and it was plain that it was so. Marius felt the beating of his heart stop; what should he do? fire the pistol and deliver all these villains into the hands of justice? But the hideous man with the pole-axe could not be the less out of reach with the girl, and Marius thought

of Thénardier's words, whose sanguinary meaning he could read,—*If you have me arrested my pal will settle the Lark*; now he felt himself checked, not only by the Colonel's will, but by his love and the peril of her whom he loved. The frightful situation, which had already lasted above an hour, changed its aspect at every moment, and Marius had the strength to review in turn all the most frightful conjectures, while seeking a hope and finding none. The tumult of his thoughts contrasted with the lugubrious silence of the den. In the midst of this silence, the sound of the staircase door being opened and shut became audible. The prisoner gave a start in his bonds.

"Here's my wife," said Thénardier.

He had scarce finished speaking when Mother Thénardier rushed into the room, red, out of breath, and with flashing eyes, and shouted as she struck her thighs with her two big hands,—

"A false address."

The brigand, who had accompanied her, appeared behind, and took up his pole-axe again.

"A false address?" Thénardier repeated, and she went on,—

"No Monsieur Urbain Fabre known at No. 17, Rue St Dominique. They never heard of him."

She stopped to snort, and then continued,—

"Monsieur Thénardier, that old cove has made a fool of you; for you are too good-hearted, I keep on telling you. I would have cut his throat to begin with! and if he had sulked I would have boiled him alive! that would have made him speak and tell us where his daughter is, and where he keeps his money. That is how I should have managed the affair. People are right when they say that men are more stupid than women. Nobody at No. 17, it is a large gateway. No Monsieur Fabre at No. 17, and we went at a gallop, with a fee for the driver and all! I spoke to the porter and his wife, who is a fine, tall woman, and they did not know anybody of the name."

Marius breathed again, for She, Ursule, or the Lark—he no longer knew her name—was saved. While the exasperated woman was vociferating Thénardier sat down at the table; he remained for some minutes without saying a word, balancing his right leg and looking at the chafing-dish with an air of savage reverie. At last he said to the prisoner slowly, and with a peculiarly ferocious accent,—

"A false address? why, what did you expect?"

"To gain time!" the prisoner thundered.

And at the same moment he shook off his bonds, which were cut through: the prisoner was only fastened to the bed

by one leg. Ere the seven men had time to look about them and rush forward, he had stretched out his hand toward the fire-place, and the Thénardiers and the brigands, driven back by surprise to the end of the room, saw him almost free, and in a formidable attitude, waving round his head the red-hot chisel, from which a sinister glare shot.

In the judicial inquiry that followed this affair it was stated that a large sou, cut and worked in a peculiar manner, was found in the garret, when the police made their descent upon it. It was one of those marvels of industry which the patience of the *bagne* engenders in the darkness, and for the darkness — marvels which are nought but instruments of escape. These hideous and yet delicate products of a prodigious art are in the jewelry trade what slang metaphors are in poetry; for there are Benvenuto Cellinis at the *bagne*, in the same way as there are Villons in language. The wretch who aspires to deliverance, finds means, without tools, or, at the most, with an old knife, to saw a sou in two, hollow out the two parts without injuring the dies, and form a thread in the edge of the sou, so that the sou may be reproduced. It screws and unscrews at pleasure, and is a box; and in this box a watch-spring saw is concealed, which, if well managed, will cut through fetters and iron bars. It is believed that the unhappy convict possesses only a sou; but, not at all, he possesses liberty. It was a sou of this nature which was found by the police under the bed near the window, and a small saw of blue steel, which could be easily concealed in the sou, was also discovered. It is probable that at the moment when the bandits searched the prisoner he had the double sou about him, and hid it in his palm; and his right hand being at liberty afterwards, he unscrewed it, and employed the saw to cut the ropes. This would explain the slight noise and the almost imperceptible movements which Marius had noticed. As, however, he was unable to stoop down for fear of betraying himself, he had not cut the cord on his left leg. The bandits gradually recovered from their surprise.

"Be easy," said Bigrenaille to Thénardier, "he is still held by one leg, and will not fly away. I put the pack-thread round that paw."

Here the prisoner raised his voice,—

"You are villains, but my life is not worth so much trouble to defend. As for imagining that you could make me speak, make me write what I do not wish to write, or make me say what I do not intend to say—"

He pulled up the sleeve of his left arm and added,—

"Look here!"

At the same time he stretched out his arm, and placed on the naked flesh the red-hot chisel, which he held in his right hand by the wooden handle. Then could be heard the frizzling of the burnt flesh, and the smell peculiar to torture-rooms spread through the garret. Marius tottered in horror, and the brigands themselves shuddered—but the face of the strange old man was scarce contracted, and while the red-hot steel was burying itself in the smoking wound, he—impassive and almost august—fixed on Thénardier his beautiful glance, in which there was no hatred, and in which suffering disappeared in a serene majesty. For in great and lofty natures the revolt of the flesh and of the senses when suffering from physical pain make the soul appear on the brow, in the same way as the mutiny of troops compels the captain to show himself.

"Villains," he said, "be no more frightened of me than I am of you."

And, tearing the chisel out of the wound, he hurled it through the window, which had been left open. The horrible red-hot tool whirled through the night, and fell some distance off in the snow, which hissed at the contact. The prisoner continued,—

"Do to me what you like."

He was defenceless.

"Seize him," said Thénardier.

Two of the brigands laid their hands on his shoulders, and the masked man with the ventriloquist voice stood in front of him, ready to dash out his brains with a blow of the key at the slightest movement on his part. At the same time Marius heard below him, but so close that he could not see the speakers, the following remarks exchanged in a low voice,—

"There is only one thing to be done."

"Cut his throat!"

"Exactly."

It was the husband and wife holding council, and then Thénardier walked slowly to the table, opened the drawer, and took out the knife. Marius clutched the handle of the pistol in a state of extraordinary perplexity. For above an hour he had heard two voices in his conscience, one telling him to respect his father's will, while the other cried to him to succour the prisoner. These two voices continued their struggle uninterruptedly, and caused him an agony. He had vaguely hoped up to this moment to find some mode of reconciling these two duties, but nothing possible had occurred to him. Still the peril pressed; the last moment of delay was passed, for Thénardier, knife in hand, was reflecting a few paces from

the prisoner. Marius looked wildly around him, which is the last mechanical resource of despair. All at once he started; at his feet on his table a bright moon-beam lit up and seemed to point out to him a sheet of paper. On this sheet he read this line, written in large letters that very morning by the elder of Thénardier's daughters,—

“HERE ARE THE SLOPS.”

An idea, a flash, crossed Marius' mind; this was the solution of the frightful problem that tortured him, sparing the assassin and saving the victim. He knelt down on the chest of drawers, stretched forth his arm, seized the paper, softly detached a lump of plaster from the partition, wrapped it up in the paper, and threw it through the hole into the middle of the den. It was high time, for Thénardier had overcome his last fears, or his last scruples, and was going toward the prisoner.

“There's something falling,” his wife cried.

“What is it?” her husband asked.

The woman had bounded forward, and picked up the lump of plaster wrapped in paper, which she handed to her husband.

“How did it get here?” Thénardier asked.

“Why hang it,” his wife asked, “how do you expect that it did? through the window, of course.”

“I saw it pass,” said Bigrenaille.

Thénardier rapidly unfolded the paper, and held it close to the candle.

“Eponine's handwriting,—the devil!”

He made a signal to his wife, who hurried up to him, and showed her the line written on the paper, then added in a hollow voice,—

“Quick, the ladder! we must leave the bacon in the trap.”

“Without cutting the man's throat?” the Megæra asked.

“We haven't the time.”

“Which way?” Bigrenaille remarked.

“By the window,” Thénardier replied; “as Ponine threw the stone through the window, that's a proof that the house is not beset on that side.”

The mask with the ventriloquist voice laid his key on the ground, raised his arms in the air, and opened and shut his hands thrice rapidly, without saying a word. This was like the signal for clearing for action a-board ship; the brigands who held the prisoner let him go, and in a twinkling the rope ladder was dropped out of window and securely fastened to the sill by

the two iron hooks. The prisoner paid no attention to what was going on around him, he seemed to be thinking or praying. So soon as the ladder was fixed, Thénardier cried,—

“The lady first.”

And he dashed at the window, but as he was stepping out, Bigrenaille roughly seized him by the collar.

“No, no, my old joker, after us!” he said.

“After us!” the bandits yelled.

“You are children,” said Thénardier, “we are losing time, and the police are at our heels.”

“Very well then,” said one of the bandits, “let us draw lots as to who shall go first.”

Thénardier exclaimed,—

“Are you mad? are you drunk? why, what a set of hum-bugs; lose time, I suppose, draw lots, eh? with a wet finger? a short straw? write our names and put them in a cap—?”

“May I offer my hat?” a voice said at the door.

All turned; it was Javert, who held his hat in his hand and offered it smilingly.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

JAVERT IS THROWN OUT AGAIN.

JAVERT posted his men at nightfall, and ambushed himself behind the trees of the Rue de la barrière des Gobelins, which joins No. 50-52 on the other side of the boulevard. He had begun by opening his “pocket,” in order to thrust into it the two girls ordered to watch the approaches to the den, but he had only “nailed” Azelma; as for Eponine, she was not at her post, she had disappeared, and he had not been able to seize her. Then Javert took up his post, and listened for the appointed signal. The departure and return of the hackney coach greatly perplexed him; at length he grew impatient, and feeling sure that there “was a nest there,” and of being in “luck’s way,” and having recognized several of the bandits who went in, he resolved to enter without waiting for the pistol-shot. It will be remembered that he had Marius’ latch key, and he arrived just in time.

The startled bandits dashed at the weapons, which they had thrown into corners at the moment of their attempted escape;

and in less than a second, these seven men, formidable to look at, were grouped in a posture of defence, one with his pole-axe, another with his key, a third with his life-preserver, the others with chisel, pincers, and hammer, and Thénardier with his knife in his fist. The woman picked up an enormous paving-stone which lay in the angle of the room, and served her daughter as a footstool. Javert restored his hat to his head, and walked into the room, with folded arms, his cane hanging from his wrist, and his sword in his scabbard.

"Halt!" he shouted, "you will not leave by the window but by the door, which is not so unhealthy. You are seven and we are fifteen, so do not let us quarrel like water-carriers, but behave as gentlemen."

Bigrenaille drew a pistol from under his blouse, and placed it in Thénardier's hand, as he whispered,—

"It is Javert, and I dare not fire at that man. Dare you?"

"I should think so," Thénardier answered.

"Well, fire."

Thénardier took the pistol and aimed at Javert; the Inspector, who was only three paces from him, looked at him fixedly, and contented himself with saying,—

"Don't fire, for the pistol won't go off."

Thénardier pulled the trigger, there was a flash in the pan.

"Did I not tell you so?" Javert remarked.

Bigrenaille threw his life-preserver at Javert's feet.

"You are the Emperor of the devils, and I surrender."

"And you?" Javert asked the other bandits.

They answered, "We too."

Javert remarked calmly,—

"That is all right, I begged you to behave like gentlemen."

"I only ask one thing," Bigrenaille remarked, "that my 'baccy mayn't be stopped while I'm in solitary confinement."

"Granted," said Javert.

Then he turned and shouted, "You can come in now."

A squad of police, sword in hand, and agents armed with bludgeons and sticks, rushed in at Javert's summons, and bound the robbers. This crowd of men, scarce illumined by the candle, filled the den with shadows.

"Handcuff them all," Javert cried.

"Just come this way," a voice shouted, which was not that of a man, but of which no one could have said, "It is a woman's voice." Mother Thénardier had entrenched herself in one of the angles of the window, and it was she from whom this roar had come. The police and the agents fell back; she had thrown off her shawl and kept her bonnet on; her husband,

crouching behind her, almost disappeared under the fallen shawl, and she covered him with her body, while raising the paving-stone above her head with both hands, like a giantess about to heave a rock.

"Heads below!" she screeched.

All fell back upon the passage, and there was a large open space in the centre of the garret. The hag took a glance at the bandits, who had suffered themselves to be bound, and muttered, in a hoarse and guttural voice,—*"The cowards!"*

Javert smiled, and walked into the open space which the woman guarded with her eyes.

"Don't come nearer," she shrieked, "or I'll smash you. Be off!"

"What a grenadier!" said Javert, "the mother! you have a beard like a man, but I have claws like a woman."

And he continued to advance. Mother Thénardier, with flying hair and terrible looks, straddled her legs, bent back, and wildly hurled the paving-stone at Javert. He stooped, the stone passed over him, struck the wall, from which it dislodged a mass of plaster, and then ricocheted from angle to angle till it fell exhausted at Javert's feet. At the same moment Javert reached the Thénardiens; one of his large hands settled on the wife's shoulder, the other on the husband's head.

"Handcuffs here!" he shouted.

The policemen flocked in, and in a few seconds Javert's orders were carried out. The woman, quite crushed, looked at her own and her husband's manacled hands, fell on the ground, and, bursting into tears, cried,—

"My daughters."

"Oh, they are all right," said Javert.

By this time the police had noticed the drunken man sleeping behind the door, and shook him; he woke up, and stammered,—

"Is it all over, Jondrette?"

"Yes," Javert answered.

The six bound bandits were standing together, with their spectral faces, three daubed with black, and three masked.

"Keep on your masks," said Javert.

And, passing them in review, like a Frederick II. at a Potsdam parade, he said to the three "sweeps,"—

"Good-day, Bigrenaille." "Good-day, Brujon." "Good-day, Deux Millions."

Then turning to the three masks, he said to the man with the pole-axe, "Good-day, Gueulemer," and to the man with the

cudgel, "Good-day, Babet," and to the Ventriloquist, "Here's luck, Claquesous."

At this moment he noticed the prisoner, who had not said a word since the arrival of the police, and held his head down.

"Untie the gentleman," said Javert, "and let no one leave the room."

After saying this he sat down in a lordly way at the table, on which the candle and the ink-stand were still standing, took a stamped paper from his pocket, and began writing his report. When he had written a few lines, which are always the same formula, he raised his eyes.

"Bring the gentleman here whom these gentlemen had tied up."

The agents looked around.

"Well," Javert asked, "where is he?"

The prisoner of the bandits, M. Leblanc, M. Urbain Fabre, the father of Ursule or the Lark, had disappeared. The door was guarded, but the window was not. So soon as he found himself released, and while Javert was writing, he took advantage of the trouble, the tumult, the crowd, the darkness, and the moment when attention was not fixed upon him, to rush to the window. An agent ran up and looked out; he could see nobody, but the rope-ladder was still trembling.

"The devil!" said Javert between his teeth, "he must have been the best of the lot."

On the day after that in which these events occurred in the house on the Boulevard de l'Hôpital, a lad, who apparently came from the bridge of Austerlitz, was trudging along the right-hand walk in the direction of the Barrière de Fontainebleau, at about nightfall. This boy was pale, thin, dressed in rags, wearing canvas trousers in the month of February, and singing at the top of his lungs. At the corner of the Rue du Petit Banquier an old woman was stooping down and fumbling in a pile of mud by the lamp light; the lad ran against her as he passed, and fell back, with the exclamation,—

"My eye, why I took that for an enormous, an enormous dog!"

He uttered the word *enormous* the second time with a sonorous twang, which might be expressed by capitals; "an enormous, an ENORMOUS dog." The old woman drew herself up furiously.

"You young devil!" she growled, "if I had not been stooping I know where my foot would have been now."

The lad was already some distance off.

"K'ss! k'ss!" he said, "after all I may not have been mistaken."

The old woman, choked with indignation, drew herself up to her full height, and the street lantern fully lit up her livid face, which was hollowed by angles and wrinkles, and crows-feet connecting the corners of the mouth. The body was lost in the darkness, and her head alone could be seen; she looked like a mask of Decrepitude lit up by a flash darting through the night. The lad looked at her.

"Madame," he said, "yours is not the style of beauty which would suit me."

He went his way, and began singing again,—

"Le Roi Coup de sabot
S'en allait à la chasse,
A la chasse aux corbeaux."

At the end of these three lines he broke off. He had reached No. 50-52, and, finding the gate closed, he began giving it re-echoing and heroic kicks, which indicated rather the shoes of the man which he wore than the feet of the boy which he had. By this time the same old woman whom he had met at the corner of the Rue du Petit Banquier ran up after him, uttering shouts, and making the most extraordinary gestures.

"What's the matter? what's the matter? O Lord to God! the gate is being broken down, and the house broken into."

The kicks continued, and the old woman puffed.

"Is that the way that houses are treated at present?"

All at once she stopped, for she had recognized the gamin.

"Why, it is that Satan!"

"Hilloh! it's the old woman," said the boy. "Good evening, my dear Bougonmuche, I have come to see my ancestors."

The old woman answered with a composite grimace, an admirable instance of hatred taking advantage of old age and ugliness, which was unfortunately lost in the darkness,—

"There's nobody here, scamp."

"Nonsense," the boy said, "where's father?"

"At La Force."

"Hilloh! and mother?"

"At Saint Lazare."

"Very fine! and my sisters?"

"At the Madelonnettes."

The lad scratched the back of his ear, looked at Mame Bougon, and said, "Ah!"

Then he turned on his heels, and a moment later the old

woman who was standing in the gateway, heard him singing in his clear young voice, as he went off under the elms which were quivering in the winter breeze,—

“ Le Roi Coup de sabot
S'en allait à la chasse,
A la chasse aux corbeaux.
Monté sur des échasses,
Quand on passait dessous,
On lui payait deux sous.”

CHAPTER LXIX.

EXCELLENTLY CUT OUT.

1831 and 1832, the two years immediately attached to the revolution of July, contain the most peculiar and striking moments of history, and these two years, amid those that precede and follow them, stand out like mountains. They possess the true revolutionary grandeur, and precipices may be traced in them. The social masses, the foundations of civilization, the solid group of superimposed and adherent interests, and the secular profiles of the ancient Gallic formations, appear and disappear every moment through the stormy clouds of systems, passions, and theories. These apparitions and disappearances were called resistance and movement, but, at intervals, truth, the day-light of the human soul, flashes through all.

This remarkable epoch is so circumscribed, and is beginning to become so remote from us, that we are able to seize its principal outlines, or at any rate we will make the attempt. The Restoration was one of those intermediate phases which are so difficult to define, in which are fatigue, buzzing, murmurs, sleep, and tumult, and which, after all, are nought but the arrival of a great nation at a halting-place. These epochs are peculiar, and deceive the politician who tries to take advantage of them. At the outset the nation only demands repose, there is but one thirst, for peace, and only one ambition, to be small—which is the translation of behaving quietly. “Great events, great accidents, great adventures, great men,—O Lord! we have had enough of these, and are full of them up to the bung.” Cæsar would be given for Prusias, and Napoleon for the Roi d’Yvetôt, who was “such a merry little king.” Folk have

been marching since day-break and arrive at the evening of a long and rough march; they made their first halt with Mirabeau, the second with Robespierre, and the third with Napoleon, and they are exhausted. Everybody insists on a bed.

Worn-out devotions, crying heroisms, gorged ambitions, and made fortunes, seek, claim, implore, and solicit, what? a resting-place, and they have it. They take possession of peace, tranquillity, and leisure, and feel satisfied. Still, at the same time, certain facts arise, demand recognition, and knock at doors on their side. These facts have emerged from revolutions and wars; they exist, they live, and have the right, the right of installing themselves in society, which they do; and in the majority of instances, facts are the quarter-masters, that only prepare a billet for principles.

In such a case, this is what occurs to political philosophers: at the same time as wearied men claim rest, accomplished facts demand guarantees, for guarantees for facts are the same thing as repose for men. It is this that England asked of the Stuart after the Protector, and what France asked of the Bourbons after the Empire. These guarantees are a necessity of the times, and they must be granted. The Princes concede them, but in reality it is the force of things that gives them. This is a profound truth and worth knowing, which the Stuarts did not suspect in 1662, and of which the Bourbons did not even gain a glimpse in 1814.

The predestined family which returned to France when Napoleon collapsed, had the fatal simplicity of believing that it gave, and that it could take back what it had once given; that the Bourbon family possessed the right divine, and France possessed nothing, and that the political right conceded in the charter of Louis XVIII. was nothing else but a branch of the divine right, detached by the House of Bourbon and graciously allowed the people up to the day when the King thought proper to clutch it again. Still, from the displeasure which the gift caused it, the Bourbon family ought to have felt that it did not emanate from it. It behaved in a grudging way to the nineteenth century, and looked with an ugly smile at every expansion of the nation. To employ a trivial, that is to say, a popular and true phrase, it was crabbed, and the people noticed it.


The Government believed that it had strength because the Empire had been removed before it, like a stage scene, but it did not perceive that it had been produced in the same way, nor see that it was held in the same hand which had removed

Napoleon. It believed that it had roots, because it was the past, and was mistaken : it formed a portion of the past, but the whole of the past was France ; and the roots of French society were not in the Bourbons, but in the nation. These obscure and vivacious roots did not constitute the right of a family, but the history of a people, and were everywhere, except under the throne. The House of Bourbon had been for France the illustrious and blood-stained knot of her history, but was no longer the principal element of her destiny or the necessary basis of her feeling. She could do without the Bourbons as she had done for two-and-twenty years : there was a solution of continuity, but they did not suspect it. And how could they suspect it, when they imagined that Louis XVII. reigned at the 9th Thermidor, and that Louis XVIII. was reigning at the day of Marengo ? Never, since the origin of history, have princes been so blind in the presence of history and that portion of the divine authority which facts contain and promulgate. Never had the nether claim which is called the right of kings, denied to such a pitch the supreme right. It was a capital error that led this family to lay their hand again on the "granted" guarantees in 1814, or on the concessions, as they entitled them. It is a sad thing that what they called their concessions were our conquests, and what they called our encroachments were our rights. When the hour appeared to have arrived, the Restoration, supposing itself victorious over Bonaparte, and rooted in the country, that is to say, believing itself strong and profound, suddenly made up its mind, and risked its stake. One morning it rose in the face of France, and, raising its voice, contested the collective title, and the individual title, the sovereignty of the nation, and the liberty of the citizen. In other terms, it denied the nation what made it a nation, and the citizen what made him a citizen. This is the substratum of those famous decrees which are called the "Ordonnances" of July. The Restoration fell, and fell justly. Still, let us add, it was not absolutely hostile to all the forms of progress, and grand things were accomplished, while it stood aloof. During the Restoration the nation had grown accustomed to calm discussion, which the Republic had been deficient in, and to grandeur in peace, which was not known under the Empire. France, strong and free, had been an encouraging example for the other nations of Europe. Under Robespierre the Revolution ruled ; under Bonaparte, cannon ; while in the reigns of Louis XVIII. and Charles X. the turn arrived for intellect to speak. The wind ceased, and the torch was re-illuminated, while a pure mental light played round the serene crests. It was a

magnificent, useful, and delightful spectacle; and for fifteen years those great principles, which are so old for the thinker, so new for the statesman,—equality before the law, liberty of conscience, freedom of the press and speech, and the accessibility of all fitting men to office,—could be seen at work in a reign of peace, and publicly. Things went on thus till 1830, and the Bourbons were an instrument of civilization which broke in the hands of Providence.

The fall of the Bourbons was full of grandeur, not on their side, but on that of the nation. They left the throne with gravity, but without authority; their descent into night was not one of those solemn disappearances which impart a sombre emotion to history, and it was neither the spectral calmness of Charles I. nor the eagle cry of Napoleon. They went away, that was all, they deposited the crown and did not retain the glory, and though they were dignified, they were not august, and they were to a certain extent false to the majesty of their misfortune. Charles X., having a round table cut square during the Cherbourg voyage, seemed more anxious about the imperilled etiquette than the crumbling monarchy. This diminution saddened the devoted men who were attached to the Bourbons personally, and the serious men who honoured their race. The people behaved admirably however, and the nation, attacked one morning by a species of royalist insurrection, felt themselves so strong that they displayed no anger. They defended themselves, restrained themselves, and restored things to their place; the government in the law, the Bourbons in exile, alas! and stopped there. They took the old King Charles X. off the dais which had sheltered Louis XIV., and gently placed him on the ground, and they only touched the royal persons cautiously and sorrowfully. It was not one man, or a few men, but France, united France, France victorious, and intoxicated by its victory, which appeared to remember, and practised in the eyes of the whole world, the serious remarks of Guillaume du Vair after the day of the barricades. "It is easy for those who have been accustomed to obtain the favours of the great, and leap like a bird from branch to branch, from a low to a flourishing fortune, to show themselves bold against their prince in his misfortunes; but for my part the fortune of my kings will be ever venerable to me, and principally of those who are in affliction." The Bourbons bore away with them respect, but not regret; as we have said, their misfortune was greater than themselves, and they faded away on the horizon.

The revolution of July at once found friends and enemies in the whole world; the former rushed toward it enthusiasti-



cally and joyfully, while the latter turned away, each according to their nature. The princes of Europe, the owls of this dawn, at the first moment closed their eyes, which were hurt and stupefied, and only opened them again to menace—it is a terror easy to understand and a pardonable anger. This strange revolution had been scarce a blow, and had not even done conquered royalty the honour of treating it as an enemy and shedding its blood. In the sight of despotic governments which also have an interest in liberty calumniating itself, the revolution of July had the fault of being formidable and remaining gentle, but no attempt was made or prepared against it. The most dissatisfied and irritated persons saluted it, for whatever their selfishness or rancour may be, men feel a mysterious respect issue from events in which they are sentient of the co-operation of some one who labours above mankind. The revolution of July is the triumph of right overthrowing fact, and is a thing full of splendour. Hence came the brilliancy of the three days, and at the same time their mansuetude, for right that triumphs has no need to be violent. Right is justice and truth, and it is the property of right to remain eternally beautiful and pure. Fact, even the most necessary in appearance and best accepted by contemporaries, if it only exist as fact, and contain too little right, is no right at all, and is infallibly destined to become, with the duration of time, misshapen, foul, and perhaps even monstrous. If we wish to discover at one glance what a degree of ugliness fact can attain, when looked at through the distance of centuries, let us regard Machiavelli. He is not an evil genius, a demon, or a cowardly and servile writer: he is nothing but the fact, and not merely the Italian fact, but the European fact, the fact of the sixteenth century. He appears hideous, and is so in the presence of the moral idea of the nineteenth century. This struggle between right and fact has endured since the origin of societies. It is the task of wise men to terminate the duel, amalgamate the pure idea with human reality, and to make right penetrate fact and fact right pacifically.

CHAPTER LXX.

BADLY STITCHED.

BUT the task of wise men differs greatly from that of clever men, and the revolution of 1830 quickly stopped, for when a revolution has run ashore, the clever men plunder the wreck. Clever men in our century have decreed themselves the title of statesmen, so that the phrase has eventually become a bit of slang. For it must not be forgotten that where there is only cleverness, littleness necessarily exists, and to say "the clever" is much like saying the "mediocrities." In the same way the word statesman is often equivalent to saying "traitor." If we believe clever men, then revolutions like that of July are severed arteries, and a rapid ligature is required. Right, if too loudly proclaimed, begins to give way, and hence so soon as right is substantiated the State must be strengthened, and when liberty is injured attention must be turned to power. At this point wise men, though they had not yet separated from clever men, begin to suspect them. Power, very good! but, in the first place, what is power? and, secondly, whence does it come? The clever men do not appear to hear the muttered objection and continue their manœuvres. According to politicians who ingeniously place a mask of necessity upon profitable fiction, the first want of a people after a revolution, if that people form part of a monarchical continent, is to obtain a dynasty. In this way, they say peace is secured after the revolution, that is to say, the necessary time for repairing the house and dressing the wounds. A dynasty hides the scaffolding and covers the hospital. Now, it is not always easy to obtain a dynasty, although the first man of genius or the first adventurer met with is sufficient to make a king. You have in the first case Bonaparte, and in the second Iturbide. But the first family come across is not sufficient to form a dynasty, for there is necessarily a certain amount of antiquity required as a race, and the wrinkle of centuries cannot be improvised.

If we place ourselves at the stand-point of statesmen, with all due reserves, of course, what are the qualities of a king who issues from a revolution? He may be, and it is useful that he should be, revolutionary, that is to say, have played a personal part in the revolution, have become either compromised or renowned in it, and have wielded the axe or drawn

the sword. What are the qualities of a dynasty? it must be national, that is to say, distantly revolutionary, not through acts done, but through ideas accepted. It must be composed of the past and be historical, and of the future and be sympathetic. All this explains why the first revolutions are satisfied with finding a man, Napoleon or Cromwell, while the second are determined on finding a family, like the House of Brunswick or the House of Orléans. Royal houses resemble those Indian fig-trees, each branch of which bends down, becomes rooted in the ground, and grows into a fig-tree. Each branch of the family may become a dynasty, on the sole condition that it bends down to the people. Such is the theory of clever men.

This then is the great art; to give success the sound of a catastrophe, so that those who profit by it may also tremble at it; to season every step taken with fear, to increase the curve of the transition until progress is checked, to depreciate the great work, denounce and retrench the roughness of enthusiasm, to cut angles and nails, to wrap the triumph in wadding, roll the giant people in flannel, and put it to bed at full speed, to place this excess of health under medical treatment, and regard Hercules as a convalescent, to dilute the event in expediency, and offer to minds thirsting for the ideal this weak nectar, to take precautions against extreme success, and provide the revolution with a sun-shade. 1830 practised this theory, which had already been applied to England by 1688. 1830 is a revolution arrested half-way, and a moiety of progress is almost right. Now logic ignores this as absolutely as the sun ignores a rush-light. Who check revolutions half-way? The bourgeoisie. Why? Because the bourgeoisie represent satisfied self-interest. Yesterday appetite was felt, to-day fulness, and to-morrow satiety. The phenomenon of 1814, after Napoleon, was reproduced in 1830 after Charles X. Attempts have been made, though wrongly, to convert the bourgeoisie into a class, but they are merely the contented portion of the population. The bourgeois is a man who has at last time to sit down, and a chair is not a caste. But through a desire to sit down too soon, the progress of the human race may be arrested, and this has frequently been the fault of the bourgeoisie, and people are not a class because they commit a fault, and selfishness is not one of the divisions of the social order. However, as we must be just even towards selfishness, the condition for which that portion of the nation called the bourgeoisie aspired after the shock of 1830, was not inertia, which is complicated with indifference and sloth, and contains a little shame, nor

was it sleep, which presupposes a momentary oblivion accessible to dreams, but it was a halt. This word contains a double, singular, and almost contradictory meaning, for it implies troops on the march, that is to say, movement, and a bivouac, that is to say, rest. A halt is the restoration of strength, it is repose armed and awake, it is the accomplished fact, posting its sentries and standing on guard. A halt presupposes a combat yesterday and a combat to-morrow—it is the interlude between 1830 and 1848.

What we here call combat may also be called progress. Hence the bourgeoisie as well as the statesmen required a man who expressed the idea of a halt, an “although-because;” a composite individuality signifying revolution and stability, in other words, strengthening the present by the evident compatibility of the past with the future. This man was found “ready made,” and his name was Louis Philippe d’Orléans. The 221 made Louis Philippe king, and Lafayette undertook the coronation. He named him *the best of Republics*, and the Town Hall of Paris was substituted for the Cathedral of Rheims. This substitution of a half-throne for a complete throne was “the work of 1830.” When the clever men had completed their task, the immense fault of their solution was apparent; all this had been done beyond the pale of absolute right which shouted “I protest!” and then fell back into its formidable darkness.

CHAPTER LXXI.

LOUIS PHILIPPE.

REVOLUTIONS have a terrible arm and a lucky hand, they hit hard and choose well. Even when incomplete, bastardized, and reduced to the state of a younger revolution, like that of 1830, they nearly always retain sufficient providential light not to fall badly, and their eclipse is never an abdication. Still we must not boast too loudly, for revolutions themselves are mistaken, and grave errors have been witnessed ere now. Let us return to 1830, which was fortunate in its deviation. In the establishment which was called order after the revolution was cut short the king was worth more than the Royalty. Louis Philippe was a rare man.

Son of a father, to whom history will certainly grant extenuating circumstances, but as worthy of esteem as his father was of blame; possessing all the private virtues and several of the public virtues, careful of his health, his fortune, his person, and his business affairs; knowing the value of a minute, but not always the value of a year; sober, serious, peaceful, and patient; a good man and a good prince; sleeping with his wife, and having in his palace lacqueys whose business it was to show the conjugal couch to the cits—a regular ostentation which had grown useful after the old illegitimate displays of the elder branch; acquainted with all the languages of Europe, and, what is rarer still, with all the languages of all the interests, and speaking them; an admirable representative of the “middle classes,” but surpassing them, and in every way greater; possessing the excellent sense, while appreciating the blood from which he sprang, of claiming merit for his personal value, and very particular on the question of his race by declaring himself an Orléans and not a Bourbon; a thorough first prince of the blood, so long as he had only been Most Serene Highness, but a frank bourgeois on the day when he became His Majesty; diffuse in public, and concise in private life; branded as a miser, but not proved to be one; in reality, one of those saving men who are easily prodigal to satisfy their caprices or their duty; well read and caring but little for literature; a gentleman but not a cavalier; simple, calm, and strong; adored by his family and his household; a seductive speaker, a disabused and cold-hearted statesman, swayed by the immediate interest, governing from hand to mouth; incapable of rancour and of gratitude; pitilessly employing superiorities upon mediocrities, and clever in confounding by parliamentary majorities those mysterious unanimities which growl hoarsely beneath thrones; expansive, at times imprudent in his expansiveness, but displaying marvellous skill in his imprudence; fertile in expedients, faces, and masks; terrifying France by Europe, and Europe by France; loving his country undeniably, but preferring his family; valuing domination more than authority, and authority more than dignity; a temperament which has this mournful feature about it, that, by turning everything to success, it admits of craft and does not absolutely repudiate baseness, but at the same time has this advantage that it preserves politics from violent shocks, the state from fractures, and society from catastrophes; minute, correct, vigilant, attentive, sagacious, and indefatigable; contradicting himself at times, and belying himself; bold against Austria at Ancona, obstinate against England in Spain, bombarding Antwerp and paying Pritchard;

singing the *Marseillaise* with conviction; inaccessible to despondency, to fatigue, to a taste for the beautiful and ideal, to rash generosity, to Utopias, chimeras, anger, vanity, and fear; possessing every form of personal bravery; a general at Valmy, a private at Jemappes; eight times attacked by regicides, and constantly smiling; brave as a grenadier, and courageous as a thinker; merely anxious about the chances of an European convulsion, and unfitted for great political adventures; ever ready to risk his life, but not his work; disguising his will under influence for the sake of being obeyed rather as an intellect than as king; gifted with observation and not with divination; paying but slight attention to minds, but a connoisseur in men, that is to say, requiring to see ere he could judge; endowed with prompt and penetrating sense, fluent tongue, and a prodigious memory, and incessantly drawing on that memory, his sole similitude with Cæsar, Alexander, and Napoleon; knowing facts, details, dates, and proper names, but ignorant of the various passions and tendencies of the crowd, the internal aspirations and concealed agitation of minds—in one word, of all that may be called the invisible currents of consciences; accepted by the surface, but agreeing little with the lower strata of French society; getting out of scrapes by skill; governing too much and not reigning sufficiently; his own Prime Minister; excellent in the art of setting up the littleness of realities as an obstacle to the immensity of ideas; mingling with a true creative faculty of civilization, order, and organization, I do not know what pettifogging temper and chicanery; the founder of a family and at the same time its man-of-law; having something of Charlemagne and something of an attorney in him; but, on the whole, as a lofty and original figure, as a Prince who managed to acquire power in spite of the anxiety of France, and influence in spite of the jealousy of Europe,—Louis Philippe would be ranked among the eminent men of his age, and among the most illustrious governors known in history, if he had loved glory a little, and had a feeling for what is grand to the same extent as he had a feeling for what is useful.

Louis Philippe had been handsome, and when aged, remained graceful: though not always admired by the nation he was always so by the mob, for he had the art of pleasing and the gift of charm. He was deficient in majesty, and neither wore a crown though king, nor displayed white hair though an old man. His manners belonged to the ancient régime, and his habits to the new, a mixture of the noble and the citizen which suited 1830. Louis Philippe was transi-

tion on a throne, and retained the old pronunciation and orthography, which he placed at the service of modern opinions : he was fond of Poland and Hungary, but he wrote "les Polonois, and pronounced, "les Hongrais." He wore the uniform of the National Guard like Charles X., and the ribbon of the Legion of Honour like Napoleon. He went but rarely to mass, not at all to the chase, and never to the opera: he was incorruptible by priests, whippers-in, and ballet girls, and this formed part of his citizen popularity. He had no Court, and went out with an umbrella under his arm, and this umbrella for a long time formed part of his *nimbus*. He was a bit of a mason, a bit of a gardener, and a bit of a surgeon: he bled a postilion who had fallen from his horse, and no more thought of going out without his lancet than Henry III. would without his dagger. The Royalists ridiculed this absurd king, the first who shed blood in order to cure.

A deduction must be made in the charges which history brings against Louis Philippe, and they form three different columns, each of which gives a different total, one accusing royalty, the second the reign, and the third the king. Democratic right confiscated, progress made the second interest, the protests of the streets violently repressed, the military execution of insurrections, revolt made to run the gauntlet, the Rue Transnonain, the councils of war, the absorption of the real country in the legal country, and the government on account with three hundred thousand privileged persons—are the deeds of royalty: Belgium refused, Algeria too harshly conquered with more of barbarity than civilization, like India by the English, the breach of faith to Abd-el-Kader, Blaye, Deutz bought and Pritchard paid, are chargeable to the reign—while the policy which cares more for the family than the nation belongs to the king. As we see, when the deductions have been made, the charge against the king is reduced; but his great fault was that he was modest in the name of France. Whence comes this fault?

Louis Philippe was a king who was too much a father, and this incubation of a family which is intended to produce a dynasty, is frightened at everything, and does not like to be disturbed. Hence arises excessive timidity, which is offensive to a nation which has July 14th in its civil traditions and Austerlitz in its military annals. However, when we abstract public duties which should ever be first fulfilled, the family deserved Louis Philippe's profound tenderness for it. This domestic group was admirable, and combined virtue with talent. One of the daughters of Louis Philippe, Marie d'Orléans, placed the name of her race among artists as Charles d'Orléans had done

among the poets, and she produced a statue which she called Joan of Arc. Two of Louis Philippe's sons drew from Metternich this demagogic praise; "They are young men whose like can be found nowhere, and such Princes as were never seen before." Here is the truth, without extenuating or setting down aught in malice, about Louis Philippe. It was his good fortune to be in 1830 the Prince *égalité*, to bear within him the contradiction between the Restoration and the Revolution, and to possess that alarming phase in the Revolution which becomes reassuring in the governor: and there was never a more complete adaptation of the man to the event, for one entered the other and the incarnation took place. Louis Philippe is 1830 formed into a man, and he had also on his side that great designation to a throne, exile. He had been proscribed, wandering, and poor, and had lived by his own labour. In Switzerland, this heir to the richest princely domains of France, was obliged to sell a horse, in order to eat; at Reichenau, he had given mathematical lessons while his sister Adelaide was embroidering and sewing; and these souvenirs blended with a king rendered the bourgeoisie enthusiastic. With his own hands he had demolished the last iron cage at Mont St Michel, erected by Louis XI. and employed by Louis XV. He was the companion of Dumouriez and the friend of Lafayette; he had belonged to the Jacobin Club, and Mirabeau had tapped him on the shoulder, and Danton said to him, "Young man." At the age of twenty-four in '93, when M. de Chartres, he had witnessed from an obscure gallery in the Convention, the trial of Louis XVI., so well named *that poor tyrant*. The blind clairvoyance of the Revolution, breaking royalty in the king, and the king with royalty, while scarce noticing the man in the stern idea; the vast storm of the audience who constituted the judges; Capet not knowing what to answer; the frightful and stupefied vacillation of this royal head before the raging blast; the relative innocence of all mixed up in this catastrophe, of those who condemned as well as of him who was condemned—he, Louis Philippe, had looked at these things and contemplated these hurricanes; he had seen centuries appear at the bar of the Convention; he had seen behind Louis XVI., that unfortunate and responsible victim, the real culprit, monarchy, emerging from the darkness, and he retained in his mind a respectful terror of this immense justice of the people which is almost as impersonal as the justice of God. The traces which the Revolution left upon him were prodigious, and his memory was a living imprint of these great years, minute by minute. One day, in the presence of a wit-

ness whose statements we cannot doubt, he corrected from memory the entire letter A in the list of the Constituent Assembly.

Louis Philippe was an open-air king ; during his reign the press was free, debates were free, conscience and speech were free. Though he knew the corrosive power of light upon privileges, he left his throne exposed to the light, and history will give him credit for this honourable behaviour. Louis Philippe, like all historic men who have quitted the stage, is at the present day being tried by the human conscience, but this trial has not yet gone through its first stage. The hour when history speaks with its venerable and free accent has not yet arrived for him ; the moment has not yet come for the final judgment. Even the stern and illustrious historian, Louis Blanc, has recently toned down his first verdict. Louis Philippe was elected by the two hundred and twenty-one deputies in 1830, that is to say, by a semi-Parliament and a semi-revolution ; and, in any case, we cannot judge him here philosophically, without making some reservations in the name of the absolute democratic principle. In the sight of the absolute, everything is usurpation which trenches on the rights of man first, and the rights of the people secondly ; but what we are able to say at present is, that, in whatever way we may regard him, Louis Philippe, taken by himself, and looked at from the stand-point of human goodness, will remain, to employ the old language of old history, one of the best Princes that ever sat on a throne. What has he against him ? this throne ; take the king away from Louis Philippe and the man remains. This man is good, at times so good as to be admirable ; often in the midst of the gravest cares, after a day's struggle, after the whole diplomacy of the Continent, he returned to his apartments at night, and then, though exhausted by fatigue and want of sleep,—what did he ? He would take up a list of sentences, and spend the night in revising a criminal trial, considering that it was something to hold his own against Europe, but even greater to tear a culprit from the hands of the executioner. He obstinately resisted his keeper of the seals, and disputed the scaffold inch by inch with his Attorney-generals, those *chatterers of the law*, as he called them. At times piles of sentences covered his table, and he examined them all, and felt an agony at the thought of abandoning these wretched condemned heads. One day he said to the witness whom we just now quoted, "I gained seven of them last night." During the earlier years of his reign, the penalty of death was, as it were, abolished, and the re-erection of the scaffold was a violence done to the king. As the Grève

disappeared with the elder branch, a bourgeois Grève was established under the name of the Barrière St Jacques, for "practical men" felt the necessity of a quasi-legitimate guillotine. This was one of the victories of Casimir Perier, who represented the narrow side of the bourgeoisie, over Louis Philippe, who represented the liberal side. The king annotated Beccaria with his own hand, and after the Fieschi machine he exclaimed: *What a pity that I was not wounded, for then I could have shown mercy.* Another time, alluding to the resistance offered by his ministers, he wrote with reference to a political culprit, who is one of the most illustrious men of the day, *His pardon is granted, and all that I have to do now is to obtain it.* Louis Philippe was as gentle as Louis IX., and as good as Henri IV., and in our opinion any man deemed good by history is almost superior to one who was grand.

As Louis Philippe has been sternly appreciated by some, and perhaps harshly by others, it is very simple that a man, himself a phantom at the present day, who knew that king, should offer his testimony for him in the presence of history; this testimony, whatever its value may be, is evidently, and before all, disinterested. An epitaph written by a dead man is sincere, one shadow may console another shadow, for sharing the same darkness gives the right to praise, and there is no fear that it will ever be said of two tombs in exile—this man flattered the other.

CHAPTER LXXII.

CRACKS IN THE FOUNDATION.

At this moment, when the drama we are recounting is about to enter one of those tragic clouds which cover the beginning of the reign of Louis Philippe, it was quite necessary that this book should give an explanation about that king. Louis Philippe had entered upon the royal authority without violence or direct action on his part, through a revolutionary change of wind, which was evidently very distinct from the real object of the Revolution, but in which he, the Duc d'Orléans, had no personal initiative. He was born a prince, and believed himself elected king; he had not given himself these functions, nor had he taken them; they were offered to him and he accepted,

convinced, wrongly as we think, but still convinced, that the office was in accordance, and acceptance in harmony, with duty. Hence came an honest possession, and we say in all conscience that, as Louis Philippe was honest in the possession, and democracy honest in its attack, the amount of terror disengaged from social struggles can not be laid either on the king or the democracy. A collision of principles resembles a collision of elements; ocean defends the water and the hurricane the air; the king defends royalty, democracy defends the people; the relative, which is monarchy, resists the absolute, which is the republic; society bleeds from this conflict, but what is its suffering to-day will be its salvation at a later date; and, in any case, those who struggle must not be blamed, for one party must be mistaken. Right does not stand, like the Colossus of Rhodes, on two shores at once, with one foot in the republic, the other in royalty, but is indivisible, and entirely on one side; and a blind man is no more a culprit than a Vendean is a brigand. We must, therefore, only impute these formidable collisions to the fatality of things, and, whatever these tempests may be, human irresponsibility is mixed up with them.

The government of 1830 had a hard life of it from the beginning, and born yesterday it was obliged to combat to-day. Scarce installed, it felt everywhere the vague movements of faction beneath the foundation of July, which had so recently been laid, and was still anything but solid. Resistance sprang up on the morrow, and might, perhaps, have been born on the day before, and from month to month the hostility increased, and instead of being dull became patent. The Revolution of July, frowned upon by kings out of France, was diversely interpreted in France. God imparts to men His will visible in events, an obscure text written in a mysterious language. Men at once make themselves translations of it, hasty, incorrect translations, full of errors, gaps, and misunderstandings. Very few minds comprehend the divine language; the more sagacious, the calmer, and the more profound decipher slowly, and when they arrive with their version, the work has been done long before; there are already twenty translations offered for sale. From each translation springs a party, and from each misunderstanding a failure, and each party believes that it has the only true text, and each faction believes that it possesses the light. Often enough power itself is a faction, and there are in revolutions men who swim against the current,—they are the old parties. As revolutions issue from the right to revolt, the old parties that cling to heirloom by grace of God fancy that they have a right to revolt against them, but this is an error, for in revolu-

tions the rebel is not the people but the king. Revolution is precisely the contrary of revolt; every revolution, being a normal accomplishment, contains its legitimacy within itself, which false revolutionists at times honour, but which endures even when sullied, and survives even when bleeding. Revolutions issue, not from an accident, but a necessity, for they are a return from the factitious to the real, and they take place because they must take place.

The old legitimist parties did not the less assail the Revolution of 1830 with all the violence which springs from false reasoning. Errors are excellent projectiles, and they skilfully struck it at the spot where it was vulnerable—the flaw in its cuirass, its want of logic,—and they attacked this Revolution in its royalty. They cried to it, “Revolution, why this king?” Factions are blind men who aim excellently. This cry the revolutionists also raised, but coming from them it was logical. What was blundering in the legitimists was clear-sightedness in the democrats; 1830 had made the people bankrupt, and indignant democracy reproached it with the deed. The establishment of July struggled between these attacks, made by the past and the future; it represented the minute, contending on one side with monarchical ages, on the other with eternal right; and then, again, 1830, no longer a revolution, and becoming a monarchy, was obliged to take precedence of Europe, and it was a further difficulty to maintain peace, for a harmony desired against the grain is often more onerous than a war. From this sullen conflict, ever muzzled but ever pouting, emerged armed peace, that ruinous expedient of civilization suspecting itself. The royalty of July reared in the team of European cabinets, although Metternich would have liked to put a kicking-strap upon it. Impelled by progress in France, it impelled in its turn the slowly-moving European monarchies, and while towed it towed too.

At home, however, pauperism, beggary, wages, education, the penal code, prostitution, the fall of woman, wealth, misery, production, consumption, division, exchange, money, capital, the rights of capital, and the rights of labour,—all these questions were multiplied above society, and formed a crushing weight. Outside of political parties, properly so called, another movement became manifest, and a philosophic fermentation responded to the democratic fermentation, and chosen minds felt troubled like the crowd, differently, but quite as much. Thinking men meditated, while the soil, that is to say, the people, traversed by revolutionary currents, trembled beneath them with vague epileptic shocks. These thinkers, some isolated, but others as-

sembled in families and almost in communities, stirred up social questions, peacefully but deeply; they were impassive miners, who quietly hollowed their galleries beneath volcanoes, scarce disturbed by the dull commotions and the fires of which they caught a glimpse. This tranquillity was not the least beautiful spectacle of this agitated epoch, and these men left to political parties the question of rights to trouble themselves about the question of happiness. What they wished to extract from society was the welfare of man, hence they elevated material questions, and questions about agriculture, trade, and commerce, almost to the dignity of a religion. In civilization, such as it has been constituted a little by God and a great deal by man, instincts are combined, aggregated, and amalgamated so as to form a real hard rock, by virtue of a law of dynamics which is carefully studied by social economists, those geologists of politics. These men, who grouped themselves under different appellations, but who may all be designated by the generic title of socialists, tried to pierce this rock and cause the living waters of human felicity to gush forth; their labours embraced all questions, from that of the scaffold to that of war, and they added to the rights of man, as proclaimed by the French revolutions, the rights of the woman and the child.

For various reasons we cannot thoroughly discuss here, from the theoretical point of view, the questions raised by socialism, and we limit ourselves to an indication of them. All the questions which the socialists proposed—laying aside cosmogonic visions, reverie, and mysticism—may be carried back to two original problems, the first of which is, to produce wealth, and the second, to distribute it. The first problem contains the question of labour, the second the question of wages; in the first, the point is the employment of strength, and in the second, the distribution of enjoyments. From a good employment of strength results public power, and from a good distribution of enjoyments individual happiness. By good distribution we mean, not equal, but equitable, distribution, for the first equality is equity. From these two things, combined public power abroad and individual happiness at home, results social prosperity, that is to say, man happy, the citizen free, and the nation great.

England solves the first of these two problems,—she creates wealth admirably, but distributes it badly. This solution, which is completely on one side, fatally leads her to these two extremes, monstrous opulence and monstrous misery; all the enjoyments belong to the few, all the privations to the rest, that is to say, to the people, and privileges, exceptions, monopoly, and feudalism, spring up from labour itself. It is a false and

dangerous situation to base public power on private want, and to root the grandeur of the state in the sufferings of the individual; it is a badly composed grandeur, in which all the material elements are combined, in which no moral element enters. Communism and the agrarian law fancy that they solve the second question, but they are mistaken. Their distribution kills production, and equal division destroys emulation and consequently labour. It is a distribution made by the butcher who slaughters what he divides. Hence it is impossible to be satisfied with these pretended solutions, for killing riches is not distributing them. The two problems must be solved together in order to be properly solved; the two solutions demand to be combined, and only form one. If you solve but the first of these problems you will be Venice, you will be England, you will have, like Venice, an artificial power, like England, a material power, and you will be the wicked rich man; you will perish by violence, as Venice died, or by bankruptcy, as England will fall; and the world will leave you to die and fall, because it allows everything to die and fall which is solely selfishness, and everything which does not represent a virtue or an idea to the human race. Of course it will be understood that by the words Venice and England we do not mean the peoples, but the social constructions, the oligarchies that weigh down the nations, but not the nations themselves. Nations ever have our respect and sympathy. Venice, as a people, will live again; England, as the aristocracy, will fall, but England the nation is immortal.

Solve the two problems, encourage the rich and protect the poor, suppress misery, put an end to the unjust exhaustion of the weak by the strong; bridle the iniquitous jealousy which the man still on the road feels for him who has reached the journey's end; adjust mathematically and paternally the wage to the labour, blend gratuitous and enforced education with the growth of childhood, and render science the basis of manhood; develop intelligence while occupying the arms, be at once a powerful people and a family of happy men; democratize properly, not by abolishing, but by universalizing it, so that every citizen without exception may be a land-owner, an easier task than it may be supposed; in two words, know how to produce wealth and to distribute it, and you will possess at once material greatness and moral greatness, and be worthy to call yourself France. Such was what socialism, above and beyond a few mistaken sects, said; this is what it sought in facts, and stirred up in minds: they were admirable efforts and sacred attempts!

These doctrines, theories, and resistances, the unexpected neces-

sity for the statesman of settling with the philosophers ; glimpses caught of confused evidences, a new policy to create, agreeing with the old world, while not disagreeing too greatly from the revolutionary ideal ; a situation in which Lafayette must be expended in defending Polignac, the intuition of progress apparent behind the riots, the chambers and the street, the king's faith in the Revolution, possibly some eventual resignation sprung from the vague acceptance of a definite and superior right ; his wish to remain here, his race, his family affections, his sincere respect for the people, and his own honesty—all these painfully affected Louis Philippe, and at times, though he was so strong and courageous, crushed him beneath the difficulty of being a king. He felt beneath his feet a formidable disintegration, which, however, was not a crumbling to dust, as France was more France than ever. Dark storm-clouds were collected on the horizon ; a strange, gradually-increasing shadow was extended over men, things, and ideas ; it was a shadow that sprang from anger and systems. Everything that had been hastily suppressed stirred and fermented, and at times the conscience of the honest man held its breath, as there was such an uneasy feeling produced by this atmosphere, in which sophisms were mixed with truths. Minds trembled in the social anxiety, like leaves on the approach of a storm, and the electric tension was such that at some moments the first comer, a stranger, would produce a flash, but then the twilight obscurity fell over the whole scene again. At intervals, deep and muttered rolling allowed an opinion to be formed of the amount of lightning which the cloud must contain.

Twenty months had scarce elapsed since the Revolution of July, and the year 1832 opened with an imminent and menacing appearance. The distress of the people, workmen without bread ; the Prince of Condé suddenly departed from the world ; Brussels expelling the Nassaus, as Paris had done the Bourbons ; Belgium offering itself to a French prince and given to an English prince ; the Russian hatred of Nicholas ; behind us two demons of the South, Ferdinand in Spain and Miguel in Portugal ; the earth trembling in Italy ; Metternich stretching out his hand over Bologna ; France confronting Austria at Ancona ; in the North the sinister sound of a hammer, enclosing Poland again in its coffin ; throughout Europe angry eyes watching France ; England, a suspicious ally, prepared to push any one who staggered and to throw herself on him who fell ; the Peerage taking refuge behind Beccaria to refuse four heads to the law ; the fleurs-de-lys erased from the king's coaches ; the

cross dragged from Notre Dame; Lafayette enfeebled, Laffitte ruined; Benjamin Constant dead in poverty; Casimir Perier dead in the exhaustion of power; a political and a social disease declaring themselves simultaneously in the two capitals of the kingdom; one the city of thought, the other the city of toil; in Paris a civil war, in Lyons a servile war; and in both cities the same furnace-glow, a volcanic purple on the brow of the people; the South fanaticized, the West troubled, the Duchesse de Berry in the Vendée; plots, conspiracies, insurrections, and cholera added to the gloomy rumour of ideas the gloomy tumult of events.

CHAPTER LXXIII.

FACTS WHICH HISTORY IGNORES.

TOWARD the end of April matters became aggravated, and the fermentation assumed the proportions of an ebullition. Since 1830 there had been small partial revolts, quickly suppressed, but breaking out again, which were the sign of a vast subjacent conflagration, and of something terrible smouldering. A glimpse could be caught of the lineaments of a possible revolution, though it was still indistinct and badly lighted. France was looking at Paris, and Paris at the Faubourg St Antoine. The wine-shops in the Rue de Charonne were grave and stormy, though the conjunction of these two epithets applied to wine-shops appears singular. The Government was purely and simply put upon its trial on this, and men publicly discussed whether "they should fight or remain quiet." There were back-rooms in which workmen swore to go into the streets at the first cry of alarm, "and fight without counting their enemies." Once they had taken the pledge, a man seated in a corner of the wine-shop shouted in a sonorous voice, "You hear! You have sworn!" Sometimes they went up to a private room on the first floor, where scenes almost resembling masonic ceremonies took place, and the novice took oaths, "in order to render a service to himself as well as to the fathers of families,"—such was the formula. In the tap-rooms, "subversive" pamphlets were read, and, as a secret report of the day says, "they spurned the Government." Remarks like

the following could be heard,—“ I do not know the names of the chief, we shall not know the day till two hours beforehand.” A workman said, “ We are three hundred, let us each subscribe ten sous, and we shall have one hundred and fifty francs, with which to manufacture bullets and gunpowder.” Another said, “ I do not ask for six months, I do not ask for two. Within a fortnight we shall be face to face with the Government, for it is possible to do so with twenty-five thousand men.” Another said, “ I do not go to bed at nights now, for I am making cartridges.” From time to time well-dressed men came, who pretended to be embarrassed, and shook hands with the more important, and then went away, never staying longer than ten minutes, and significant remarks were exchanged in whispers, *The plot is ripe, the thing is ready*; to borrow the remark of one of the audience, “ this was buzzed by all present.” The excitement was so great, that one day a workman said openly in a wine-shop, “ But we have no weapons,” to which a comrade replied, “ The soldiers have them,” unconsciously parodying Bonaparte’s proclamation to the army of Italy. “ When they had any very great secret,” a report adds, “ they did not communicate it,” though we do not understand what they could conceal after what they had said. The meetings were sometimes periodical, at certain ones there were never more than eight or ten members present, and they were always the same, but at others any one who liked went in, and the room was so crowded that they were obliged to stand; some went there through enthusiasm and passion, others “ because it was the road to their work.” In the same way as during the Revolution, there were female patriots in these wine-shops, who kissed the new-comers.

Other expressive facts were collected: thus a man went into a wine-shop, drank, and went away, saying, “ Wine-dealer, the revolution will pay what is due.” Revolutionary agents were nominated at a wine-shop opposite the Rue de Charonne, and the ballot was made in caps. Workmen assembled at a fencing-master’s who gave lessons in the Rue de Cotte. There was a trophy of arms, made of wooden sabres, canes, cudgels, and foils. One day the buttons were removed from the foils, and a workman said, “ We are five-and-twenty, but they do not reckon upon me, as they consider me a machine.” This man was at a later date Quénisset. Things that were premeditated gradually assumed a strange notoriety; a woman who was sweeping her door said to another woman, “ They have been making cartridges for a long time past.” In the open streets

proclamations addressed to the National Guards of the departments were read aloud, and one of them was signed, "Brutot, wine-dealer."

One day a man with a large beard and an Italian accent leaped on a bench at the door of a dram-shop, in the *Marché Lenoir*, and begun reading a singular document, which seemed to emanate from some occult power. Groups assembled round him and applauded, and the passages which most excited the mob were noted down at the time. "Our doctrines are impeded, our proclamations are torn down, our bill-stickers watched and cast into prison. * * * * The future of the people is being worked out in our obscure ranks. * * * * These are the terms laid down, action or reaction, revolution or counter-revolution, for in our age no one still believes in inertia or immobility. For the people, or against the people, that is the question, and there is no other. * * * * On the day when we no longer please you, break us, but till then aid us to progress." All this took place in broad daylight. Other facts, of even a more audacious nature, appeared suspicious to the people, owing to their very audacity. On April 4th, 1832, a passer-by leaped on the bench at the corner of the *Rue Sainte Marguerite*, and shouted, "I am a Babouviste," but the people scented *Gisquet* under *Babœuf*. Among other things this man said,— "Down with property! the opposition of the Left is cowardly and treacherous: when they wish to be in the right, they preach the Revolution; they are democratic that they may not be defeated, and royalist so that they need not fight. The republicans are feathered beasts; distrust the republicans, citizen-workmen!" "Silence, citizen-spy!" a workman shouted, and this put an end to the speech.

Mysterious events occurred. At nightfall a workman met a "well-dressed" man near the canal, who said to him, "Where art thou going, citizen?" "Sir," the workman answered, "I have not the honour of knowing you"—"I know thee, though;" and the man added, "Fear nothing, I am the agent of the committee, and it is suspected that thou art not to be trusted. But thou knowest that there is an eye upon thee, if thou darest to reveal anything." Then he shook the workman's hand and went away, saying, "We shall meet again soon." The police, who were listening, overheard singular dialogues, not only in the wine-shops but in the streets. "Get yourself ready soon," said a weaver to a cabinet-maker. "Why so?" "There will be shots to fire." Two passers-by in rags exchanged the following peculiar remarks, which were big with an apparent *Jacquerie*; "Who governs us?" "It is Monsieur

Philippe." "No, the bourgeoisie." It would be an error to suppose that we attach a bad sense to the word *Jacquerie*; the Jacques were the poor, and those who are starving have right on their side. Another time a man was heard saying to his companion, "We have a famous plan of attack." Only the following fragment was picked up at a private conversation between four men seated in a ditch, near the Barrière du Trône,—“Everything possible will be done to prevent him walking about Paris any longer.” “Who is the *he*?” there is a menacing obscurity about it. The “principal chiefs,” as they were called in the faubourg, kept aloof, but were supposed to assemble to arrange matters at a wine-shop near the Point St Eustache. A man of the name of Aug, chief of the society for the relief of tailors, was supposed to act as central intermediary between the chiefs and the Faubourg St Antoine. Still, a considerable amount of obscurity hangs over these chiefs, and no fact could weaken the singular pride in the answer made at a later date, by a prisoner brought before the Court of Peers.

“Who was your chief?”

“I did not know any, or recognize any.”

As yet they were but words, at times mere rumours and hear-says, but other signs arrived ere long. A carpenter engaged in the Rue de Rueilly in nailing up a fence round a block of ground on which a house was being built, found on the ground a piece of a torn letter, on which the following lines were still legible: “* * * The Committee must take measures to prevent recruiting in the sections for the different societies;” and as a postscript, “We have learned that there are guns at No. 5, Rue du Faubourg, Poissonnière, to the number of five or six thousand, at a gunmaker’s in the yard. The Section possesses no arms.” What startled the carpenter, and induced him to show the thing to his neighbours, was that a few paces further on he found another paper, also torn, and even more significant, of which we reproduce the shape, owing to the historic interest of these strange documents.

Q	C	D	E	<i>Apprenez cette liste par cœur, après, vous la déchirez: Les hommes admis en feront autant lorsque vous leur aurez transmis des ordres.</i> <i>Salut et Fraternité.</i> <i>u. og. a. fe.</i>

Persons at that time on the scent of this discovery did not

learn till a later date the meaning of the four capitals: *quinturons*, *centurions*, *décurions*, and *éclaireurs*, and the sense of the letters: *u. og. a^l. fe.*, which were a date, and indicated *this 15th April*, 1832. Under each capital letter were written names followed by very characteristic remarks. Thus, Q *Baunernerel*, 8 guns, 83 cartridges. A safe man.—C *Boubière*, 1 pistol, 40 cartridges.—D *Rollet*, 1 foil, 1 pistol, 1 lb. gunpowder.—E *Tessin*, 1 sabre, 1 cartouche-box. Punctual. *Terruer*, 8 guns, brave, &c. Lastly, this carpenter found in the same enclosure a third paper, on which was written in pencil, but very legibly, this enigmatical list.

Unité: Blanchard, Arbre sec. 6.

Barra. Sixteen. Sabre au Comte.

Kosciuske, Aubrey the butcher?

J. J. R.

Caius Graccus.

Right of revision. Dufond. Four.

Downfall of the Girondists. Dubac. Maubrière.

Washington. Pinson, 1 pist., 86 cart.

Marseillaise.

Sovereignty of the people. Michel Quincampoix.

Sabre.

Hoche.

Marceau, Plato. Arbre sec.

Warsaw, Tilly, crier of the *Populaire*.

The honest citizen in whose hands this list remained learned its purport. It seems that the list was the complete nomenclature of the sections of the fourth arrondissement of the Society of the Rights of Man, with the names and addresses of the chiefs of sections. At the present day, when these obscure facts have become historic, they may be published. We may add that the foundation of the Society of the Rights of Man seems to have been posterior to the date on which this paper was found, and so it was possibly only a sketch. After propositions and words, and written information, material facts began to pierce through. In the Rue Popincourt, at the shop of a broker, seven pieces of paper, all folded alike, were found in a drawer; these papers contained twenty-six squares of the same grey paper, folded in the shape of cartridges, and a card on which was written:

Saltpetre	12 oz.
Sulphur	2 „
Charcoal	2½ „
Water	8 „

The report of the seizure showed that there was a strong smell of gunpowder in the drawer.

A mason, returning home after his day's work, left a small parcel on the bench near the bridge of Austerlitz,—it was carried to the guard-house and opened, and from it were taken two printed dialogues signed *Lahautière*, a song called "Workmen, combine!" and a tin box full of cartridges. A workman drinking with his comrade bade him feel how hot he was; and the other noticed a pistol under his jacket. In a ditch on the boulevard between Père la Chaise and the Barrière du Trône, some children, playing at the most deserted spot, discovered under a heap of rubbish a bag containing a bullet mould, a mandril for making cartridges, a pouch, in which there were some grains of gunpowder, and an iron ladle, on which were evident signs of melted lead. Some police agents suddenly entering at five A. M. the room of one Pardon, who was at a later date a Sectionist belonging to the Mercy Barricade section, found him sitting on his bed and making cartridges. At the hour when workmen are generally resting, two men were noticed to meet between the Picpus and Charenton barrières, in a lane running between two walls. One took a pistol from under his blouse, which he handed to the other; as he gave it him he noticed that the perspiration on his chest had damped the gunpowder, he therefore filled the pan afresh, and the two men thereupon parted. A man of the name of Gallas, afterwards killed in the April affair in the Rue Beaubourg, used to boast that he had at home seven hundred cartridges and twenty-four gun flints. One day the government received information that arms and two hundred thousand cartridges had just been distributed in the faubourg, and the next week thirty thousand further cartridges were given out. The remarkable thing was that the police could not seize any of them; but an intercepted letter stated: "The day is not far distant when eighty thousand patriots will be under arms in four hours."

All this fermentation was public, we might almost say calm, and the impending insurrection prepared its storm quietly in the face of the government. No singularity was lacking in this crisis, which was still subterranean, but already perceptible. The citizens spoke peacefully to the workmen of what was preparing. They said, "How is the revolt going on?" in the same tone as they could have said, "How is your wife?" A furniture broker in the Rue Moreau asked, "Well, when do you attack?" and another shop-keeper said, "They will attack soon, I know it. A month ago there were fifteen thousand of you, and now there are twenty-five thousand." He

offered his gun, and a neighbour offered a pocket pistol which was marked for sale at seven francs. The revolutionary fever spread, and no point of Paris or of France escaped it. The artery throbbed everywhere, and the network of secret societies began spreading over the country like the membranes which spring up from certain inflammations, and are formed in the human body. From the Association of the Friends of the people, which was at the same time public and secret, sprang the Society of the Rights of Man, which thus dated one of its orders of the day, *Pluviose, an 40 of the republican era*; a society which was destined even to survive the decrees that suppressed it did not hesitate to give to its sections significant titles like the following:

"Pikes. The toxin. The alarm gun. The Phrygian cap. January 21. The beggars. The mendicants. March forward. Robespierre. The level. Ca ira."

The Society of the Rights of Man engendered the Society of Action, composed of impatient men who detached themselves and hurried forward. Other associations tried to recruit themselves in the great mother societies: and the Sectionists complained of being tormented. Such were the "Gaulish Society" and the "Organizing Committee of the Municipalities;" such the associations for the "Liberty of the Press," for "Individual Liberty," for the "Instruction of the People," and "against indirect Taxes." Next we have the Society of Equalitarian workmen divided into three fractions—the equalitarians, the communists, and the reformers. Then, again, the army of the Bastilles, a cohort possessing military organization, four men being commanded by a corporal, ten by a sergeant, twenty by a sub-lieutenant, and forty by a lieutenant; there were never more than five men who knew each other. This is a creation which is boldly combined, and seems to be marked with the genius of Venice. The central committee which formed the head, had two arms—the Society of Action and the Army of the Bastilles. A legitimist association, the "Knights of Fidelity," agitated among these republican affiliations, but was denounced and repudiated. The Parisian societies ramified through the principal cities; Lyons, Nantes, Lille, had their Society of the Rights of Man, The Charbonnière, and the Free Men. Aix had a revolutionary society called the Cougourde. We have already mentioned that name.

At Paris the Faubourg Marceau buzzed no less than the Faubourg St Antoine, and the schools were quite as excited as the faubourgs. A coffee-shop in the Rue Saint Hyacinthe, and the Estaminet des Sept Billiards in the Rue des Mathurins St Jacques, served as the gathering-place for the students. The

Society of the Friends of the A. B. C. affiliated with the Mutualists of Angers, and the Cougourde of Aix assembled, as we have seen, at the Café Musain. The same young men met, as we have also said, at a wine-shop and eating-house near the Rue Montdetour, called Corinthe. These meetings were secret, but others were as public as possible, and we may judge of their boldness by this fragment from an examination that was held in one of the ulterior trials. "Where was the meeting held?" "In the Rue de la Paix." "At whose house?" "In the street." "What sections were there?" "Only one." "Which one?" "The Manuel section." "Who was the chief?" "Myself." "You are too young to have yourself formed this serious resolve of attacking the government. Whence came your instructions?" "From the central committee." The army was undermined at the same time as the population, as was proved at a later date by the movements of Béfort, Luneville, and Epinal. Hopes were built on the 52nd, 5th, 8th, and 37th regiments, and on the 20th light infantry. In Burgundy and the southern towns the tree of liberty was planted, that is to say, a mast surmounted by a red cap.

Such was the situation.

This situation was rendered more sensible and marked by the Faubourg St Antoine than by any other group of the population. This old faubourg, peopled like an ant-heap, laborious, courageous, and passionate as a hive of bees, quivered in expectation and the desire of a commotion. All was agitation there, but labour was not suspended on that account. Nothing could give an idea of these sharp and sombre faces, for there are in this faubourg crushing distress hidden under the roofs of houses, and also ardent and rare minds. In cases in which distress and intellect are mingled it is extremely dangerous for extremes to meet. The Faubourg St Antoine had other causes for excitement, as it received the counter-stroke of commercial crises, bankruptcies, stoppages, and cessation of work, which are inherent in all political convulsions. In revolutionary times misery is at once the cause and the effect, and the blow which it deals falls upon itself again. This population, full of haughty virtue, capable of the highest amount of latent caloric, ever ready to take up arms, prompt to explode, irritated, profound, and undermined, seemed to be only waiting for the fall of a spark. Whenever certain sparks float about the horizon, driven by the wind of events, we cannot help thinking of the Faubourg St Antoine and the formidable chance which has placed at the gates of Paris this powder-magazine of sufferings and ideas.

The wine-shops of the *Faubourg Antoine*, which have been more than once referred to in this sketch, possess an historic notoriety. In times of trouble people grow intoxicated in them more on words than wine; and a species of prophetic spirit and an effluvium of the future circulates there, swelling hearts and ennobling minds. These wine-shops resemble the taverns on the Mons Aventinus, built over the Sibyl's cave and communicating with the profound sacred blasts: taverns, in which the tables were almost tripods, and people drank what Ennius calls the Sibylline wine. The *Faubourg St Antoine* is a reservoir of the people in which the revolutionary earthquake makes fissures, through which the sovereignty of the people flows. This sovereignty can act badly, it deceives itself like other things, but even when led astray it remains grand. We may say of it, as of the blind Cyclops, *Ingens*. In '93, according as the idea that floated was good or bad, or according as it was the day of fanaticism or enthusiasm, savage legions or heroic bands issued from this faubourg. Savage,—let us explain that word. What did these bristling men want, who, in the Genesis of the revolutionary chaos, rushed upon old overthrown Paris in rags, yelling and ferocious, with uplifted clubs and raised pikes? They wanted the end of oppression, the end of tyranny, the end of the sword, work for the man, instruction for the child, social gentleness for the woman, liberty, equality, fraternity, bread for all, the idea for all, the Edenisation of the world, and progress; and this holy, good, and sweet thing called progress, they, driven to exasperation, claimed terribly with upraised weapons and curses. They were savages, we grant, but the savages of civilization. They proclaimed the right furiously, and wished to force the human race into Paradise, even were it through trembling and horror. They seemed barbarians, and were saviours; they demanded light while wearing the mask of night. Fancy these men who are stern in alarm, and terrifying, but are so for good; there are other men, smiling, embroidered, gilded, beribboned, in silk stockings, with white feathers, yellow gloves, and kid shoes, who, leaning upon a velvet-covered table near a marble chimney-piece, gently insist on the maintenance and preservation of the past, of the middle ages, of divine right, of fanaticism, of ignorance, of slavery, of the punishment of death, and of war, and who glorify in a low voice and with great politeness the sabre, the pyre, and the scaffold. For our part, were we compelled to make a choico between the barbarians of civilization and the civilized of barbarism, we would choose the barbarians. But, thanks be to Heaven, another choice is possible; no fall down an abyss is

required, either in front or behind, neither despotism nor terrorism. We wish for progress on a gentle incline, and God provides for this, for His entire policy is contained in reducing the incline.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

ENJOLRAS AND HIS LIEUTENANTS.

SHORTLY after this period Enjolras made a sort of mysterious census, as if in the view of a possible event. All were assembled in council at the Café Musain. Enjolras spoke, mingling a few half-enigmatical but significant metaphors with his words.

"It behoves us to know where we are, and on whom we can count. If we want combatants we must make them; and there is no harm in having weapons to strike with. Passerby always run a greater chance of being gored when there are bulls in the road than when there are none. So, suppose we count the herd. How many are there of us? This task must not be deferred till to-morrow, for revolutionists must always be in a hurry, as progress has no time to lose. Let us distrust the unexpected, and not allow ourselves to be taken unawares; we have to go over all the seams which we have sewn, and see whether they hold, and the job must be done to-day. Courfeyrac, you will see the Polytechnic students, for this is their day for going out. Feuilly, you will see those of La Glacière, and Combeferre has promised to go to the Picpus. Bahorel will visit the Estrapade. Prouvaire, the masons are growing luke-warm, so you will obtain us news from the lodge in the Rue de Grenelle St Honoré. Joly will go to Dupuytren's clinical lecture, and feel the pulse of the medical scholars, while Bossuet will stroll round the Palace and talk with the law students. I take the Cougourde myself."

"That is all settled," said Courfeyrac.

"No. There is another very important matter."

"What is it?" Combeferre asked.

"The Barrière du Maine."

Enjolras was absorbed in thought for a moment, and then continued,—

"At the Barrière du Maine are stone-cutters and painters, an enthusiastic body, but subject to chills. I do not know

what has been the matter with them for some time past, but they are thinking of other things. They are dying out, and they spend their time in playing at dominoes. It is urgent to go and talk to them rather seriously, and they meet at Richefin's, where they may be found between twelve and one o'clock. Those ashes must be blown up, and I had intended to intrust the task to that absent fellow Marius, who is all right, but no longer comes here. I need some one for the Barrière du Maine, and have no one left."

"Why, I am here," said Grantaire.

"What! You indoctrinate Republicans? you warm up chilled hearts in the name of principles?"

"Why not?"

"Can you possibly be fit for anything?"

"Well, I have a vague ambition to be so."

"You believe in nothing."

"I believe in you."

"Grantaire, will you do a service?"

"Any one; clean your boots."

"Well, do not interfere in our affairs, but sleep off your absinthe."

"You are an ungrateful fellow, Enjolras!"

"You be the man capable of going to the Barrière du Maine!"

"I am capable of going down the Rue des Grès, crossing St Michael's Square, cutting through the Rue Monsieur le Prince, taking the Rue de Vaugirard, passing the Carmelites, turning into the Rue d'Assas, arriving at the Rue Cherche Midi, leaving behind me the Council of War, stepping across the Rue des Vieilles-Tuileries, following the main road, going through the gate and entering Richefin's. I am capable of all that, and so are my shoes."

"Do you know the men at Richefin's?"

"Not much."

"What will you say to them?"

"Talk to them about Robespierre, Danton, and principles."

"You!"

"I. You really do not do me justice, for when I make up my mind to it I am terrible. I have read Prudhomme, I know the social contract, and have by heart my constitution of the year II. 'The liberty of the citizen ends where the liberty of another citizen begins.' Do you take me for a brute? I have an old assignat in my drawer,—The Rights of Man, the sovereignty of the people. Sapristi! I am a bit of a Hebertist myself. I can discourse splendid things for six hours at a stretch, watch in hand."

"Be serious," said Enjolras.

"I am stern," Grantaire answered.

Enjolras reflected for a few seconds, and then seemed to have made up his mind.

"Grantaire," he said gravely, "I consent to try you. You shall go to the *Barrière du Maine*."

Grantaire kept in a furnished room close to the *Café Musain*. He went away and returned five minutes after—he had been home to put on a waistcoat of the Robespierre cut.

"Red," he said, on entering, and looked intently at Enjolras.

Then he energetically turned back on his chest the two scarlet points of the waistcoat, and, walking up to Enjolras, whispered in his ear, "All right!" He boldly cocked his hat, and went out. A quarter of an hour after the back-room of the *Café Musain* was deserted, and all the Friends of the A. B. C. were going in various directions about their business. Enjolras, who had reserved the *Cougourde* for himself, was the last to leave. The Members of the *Aix Cougourde* who were in Paris assembled at that period on the plain of Issy, in one of the abandoned quarries so numerous on that side of Paris.

Enjolras, while walking toward the meeting-place, took a mental review of the situation. The gravity of the events was visible, for when the facts which are the forerunners of latent social disease move heavily, the slightest complication checks and impedes their action. It is a phenomenon from which collapse and regeneration issue. Enjolras caught a glimpse of a luminous upheaving behind the dark clouds of the future. Who knew whether the moment might not be at hand when the people would seize their rights once again? What a splendid spectacle! the Revolution majestically taking possession of France once more, and saying to the world, "To be continued tomorrow!" Enjolras was satisfied, for the furnace was a-glow, and he had at that self-same moment a gunpowder train of friends scattered over Paris. He mentally compared Combeferre's philosophic and penetrating eloquence, Feuilly's cosmopolitan enthusiasm, Courfeyrac's humour, Bahorel's laugh, Jean Prouvaire's melancholy, Joly's learning, and Bossuet's sarcasm, to a species of electrical flash, which produced fire everywhere simultaneously. All were at work, and most certainly the result would respond to the effort. That was good, and it made him think of Grantaire. "Ah," he said to himself, "the *Barrière du Maine* is hardly at all out of my way, so suppose I go on to Richefin's and see what Grantaire is doing, and how far he has got."

It was striking one by the Vaugirard church when Enjolras reached Richesfin's. He pushed open the door, went in, folded his arms, and looked about the room, which was full of tables, men, and tobacco smoke. A voice was audible in this fog, it was Grantaire talking with some opponent of his. Grantaire was seated opposite another man, at a marble table covered with saw-dust and studded with dominoes. He smote the marble with his fist, and this is what Enjolras heard:—

"Double six."

"A four."

"The pig! I haven't any left."

"You are dead. A two."

"A six."

"A three."

"An ace."

"I have to show."

"Four points."

"Painfully."

"It is yours."

"I made an enormous mistake."

"You are getting on all right."

"Fifteen."

"Seven more."

"That makes me twenty-two (pensively). Twenty-two!"

"You did not expect the double six. Had I played it at first it would have changed the whole game."

"Double two."

"An ace."

"An ace! well, a five!"

"I haven't one."

"You played first, I believe?"

"Yes."

"A blank."

"What luck he has! Ah! you have a luck. (A long reverie), a two."

"An ace."

"I've neither a five nor an ace. It is stupid for you."

"Domino!"

"Oh, the deuce!"

CHAPTER LXXV.

THE LARK'S FIELD.

MARIUS witnessed the unexpected dénouement of the snare upon whose track he had placed Javert, but the Inspector had scarce left the house, taking his prisoners with him in three hackney coaches, ere Marius stepped out of the house in his turn. It was only nine in the evening, and Marius went to call on Courfeyrac, who was no longer the imperturbable inhabitant of the Pays Latin. He had gone to live in the Rue de la Verrière, "for political reasons," and this district was one of those in which insurrectionists of the day were fond of installing themselves. Marius said to Courfeyrac, "I am going to sleep here," and Courfeyrac pulled off one of his two mattresses, laid it on the ground, and said, "There you are!" At seven o'clock the next morning Marius returned to No. 50-52, paid his quarter's rent, and what he owed to Mame Boujon, had his books, bed, table, chest of drawers, and two chairs, placed on a truck, and went away, without leaving his address, so that, when Javert returned in the morning to question Marius about the events of the previous evening, he only found Mame Boujon, who said to him,—“Gone away.” Mame Boujon was convinced that Marius was in some way an accomplice of the robbers arrested the previous evening. “Who would have thought it!” she exclaimed to the portresses of the quarter, “a young man whom you might have taken for a girl!”

Marius had two reasons for moving so promptly, the first was that he now felt a horror of this house, in which he had seen so closely, and in all its most repulsive and ferocious development, a social ugliness more frightful still, perhaps, than the wicked rich man—the wicked poor man. The second was that he did not wish to figure at the trial, which would in all probability ensue, and be obliged to give evidence against Thénardier. Javert believed that the young man, whose name he forgot, had been frightened and had run away, or else had not even returned home; he made some efforts, however, to find him, which were unsuccessful. A month elapsed, then another. Marius was still living with Courfeyrac, and had learned from a young barrister, an habitual walker of the *Salle des pas Perdus*, that Thénardier was in solitary confinement,

and every Monday he left a five-franc piece for him at the wicket of La Force. Marius, having no money left, borrowed the five francs of Courfeyrac; it was the first time in his life that he borrowed money. These periodical five francs were a double enigma for Courfeyrac who gave them, and for Thénardier who received them. "Where can they go to?" Courfeyrac thought. "Where can they come from?" Thénardier asked himself.

Marius, however, was heart-broken, for everything had disappeared again under a trap-door. He saw nothing ahead of him, and his life was once more plunged into the mystery in which he had been groping. He had seen again momentarily and very closely the girl whom he loved, the old man who appeared her father, the strange beings who were his only interest and sole hope in this world, and at the moment when he fancied that he should grasp them, a breath had carried off all these shadows. Not a spark of certainty and truth had flashed even from that most terrific collision, and no conjecture was possible. He no longer knew the name of which he had felt so certain, and it certainly was not Ursule, and the Lark was a nick-name; and then, what must he think of the old man? did he really hide himself from the police? The white-haired workman whom Marius had met in the vicinity of the Invalides reverted to his mind, and it now became probable that this workman and M. Leblanc were one and the same. He disguised himself then, and this man had his heroic side and his equivocal side. Why did he not call for help? why did he fly? was he, yes or no, the father of the girl? and, lastly, was he really the man whom Thénardier fancied he recognized? Thénardier might have been mistaken. These were all so many insoluble problems. All this, it is true, in no way lessened the angelic charm of the maiden of the Luxembourg, and hence arose the poignant distress. Marius had a passion in his heart, and night over his eyes. He was impelled, he was attracted, and he could not stir; all had vanished, except love, and he had lost the sudden instincts and illuminations of even that love. Usually this flame which burns us enlightens us a little, and casts some useful light without, but Marius no longer even heard the dumb counsel of passion. He never said to himself, Suppose I were to go there, or try this thing or the other? She whom he could no longer call Ursule was evidently somewhere, but nothing advised Marius in what direction he should seek her. All his life was now summed up in two words,—absolute uncertainty, in an impenetrable fog,—and though he still longed to see her, he no longer hoped it. As a climax, want returned,

and he felt its icy breath close to him and behind him. In all these torments, and for a long time, he had discontinued his work, and nothing is more dangerous than discontinued work, for it is a habit which a man loses—a habit easy to give up, but difficult to reacquire.

A certain amount of reverie is good, like a narcotic taken in discreet doses. It lulls to sleep the at times harsh fevers of the working brain, and produces in the mind a soft and fresh vapour which corrects the too sharp outlines of pure thought, fills up gaps and spaces here and there, and rounds the angles of ideas. But excess of reverie submerges and drowns, and woe to the mental workman who allows himself to fall entirely from thinking into reverie! he believes that he can easily rise again, and says that, after all, it is the same thing, but it is an error! Thought is the labour of the intellect, and reverie its voluptuousness; substituting reverie for thought is like confounding a person with his nutriment. Marius, it will be remembered, began with that; passion arrived, and finished by hurling him into objectless and bottomless chimeras. In such a state a man only leaves his home to go and dream, and it is an indolent childishness, a tumultuous and stagnant gulf, and in proportion as work diminishes, necessities increase. This is a law; man in a dreamy state is naturally lavish and easily moved, and the relaxed mind can no longer endure the contracted life. There is, in this mode of existence, good mingled with evil, for if the softening be mournful, the generosity is healthy and good. But the poor, generous, and noble-minded man, who does not work, is ruined, the resources dry up, and necessity arises. This is a fatal incline, on which the most honest and the strongest men are dragged down like the weakest and the most vicious, and which leads to one of two holes,—suicide or crime. Through going out to dream, a day arrives when a man goes out to throw himself into the water. Excess of dreaminess produces such men as Escousse and Libras. Marius went down this incline slowly, with his eyes fixed upon her whom he no longer saw. What we have just written seems strange, and yet it is true,—the recollection of an absent being is illumined in the gloom of the heart; the more it disappears the more radiant it appears, and the despairing and obscure soul sees this light on its horizon, the star of its inner night. She was Marius' entire thought, he dreamed of nothing else. He felt confusedly that his old coat was becoming an impossible coat, and that his new coat was growing an old coat, that his boots were wearing out, that his hat was wearing out, that his shirts were

wearing out, that is to say, that his life was wearing out; and he said to himself, Could I but see her again before I die!

One sole sweet idea was left him, and it was that she had loved him, that her glance had told him so, and that she did not know his name, but that she knew his soul, and that however mysterious the spot might be where she now was, she loved him still. Might she not be dreaming of him as he was dreaming of her? At times in those inexplicable hours which every loving heart knows, as he had only reason to be sad, and yet felt within him a certain quivering of joy, he said to himself, "Her thoughts are visiting me," and then added, "Perhaps my thoughts also go to her." This illusion, at which he shook his head a moment after, sometimes, however, contrived to cast rays which resembled hope into his soul at intervals. Now and then, especially at that evening hour which most saddens dreamers, he poured out upon virgin paper the pure, impersonal, and ideal reveries with which love filled his brain. He called this "writing to her." We must not suppose, however, that his reason was in disorder, quite the contrary. He had lost the faculty of working and going firmly toward a determined object, but he retained clear-sightedness and rectitude more fully than ever. Marius saw by a calm and real, though singular, light, all that was taking place before him, even the most indifferent men and facts, and spoke correctly of everything with a sort of honest weariness and candid disinterestedness. His judgment, almost detached from hope, soared far above him. In this state of mind nothing escaped him, nothing deceived him, and he discovered at each moment the bases of life—humanity and destiny. Happy, even in agony, is the man to whom God has granted a soul worthy of love and misfortune! He who has not seen the things of this world and the heart of man in this double light, has seen nothing of the truth and knows nothing, for the soul that loves and suffers is in a sublime state. Days succeeded each other, and nothing new occurred; it really seemed to him that the gloomy space which he still had to traverse was becoming daily reduced. He fancied that he could already see distinctly the brink of the bottomless abyss.

"What!" he repeated to himself, "shall I not see her again before that takes place?"

After going up the Rue St Jacques, leaving the barrière on one side, and following for some distance the old inner boulevard, you reach the Rue de la Santé, then the Glacière, and just before coming to the small stream of the Gobelins, you notice a sort of field, the only spot on the long and monotonous

belt of Parisian boulevards, where Ruysdael would be tempted to sit down. I know not whence the picturesque aspect is obtained, for you merely see a green field crossed by ropes, on which rags hang to dry; an old house built in the time of Louis XIII., with its high-pitched roof quaintly pierced with garret-windows; broken-down gratings; a little water between poplar trees; women's laughter and voices; on the horizon you see the Pantheon, the tree of the Deaf-mutes, the Val de Grâce, black, stunted, fantastic, amusing and magnificent, and far in the back-ground the stern square towers of Notre Dame. As the place is worth seeing, no one goes to it: scarce a cart or a waggon passes in a quarter of an hour. It once happened that Marius' solitary rambles led him to this field, and on that day there was a rarity on the boulevard, a passer-by. Marius, really struck by the almost savage grace of the field, asked him,—“What is the name of this spot?”

The passer-by answered, “It is the Lark's field;” and added, “It was here that Ulback killed the shepherdess of Ivry.”

But, after the words “the Lark,” Marius heard no more, for a word at times suffices to produce a congelation in a man's dreamy condition: the whole thought is condensed round an idea, and is no longer capable of any other perception. The Lark, that was the appellation which had taken the place of Ursule in the depths of Marius' melancholy. “Stay,” he said, with that sort of unreasoning stupor peculiar to such mysterious asides, “this is her field, I shall learn here where she lives.” This was absurd but irresistible, and he came daily to this Lark's field.

CHAPTER LXXVI.

CRIMES IN EMBRYO.

JAVERT's triumph at the Maison Gorbeau had seemed complete, but was not so. In the first place, and that was his chief anxiety, Javert had not been able to make a prisoner of the prisoner: the assassinated man who escapes is more suspicious than the assassin, and it was probable that this man who escaped, though a precious capture for the bandits, might be equally so for the authorities. Next, Montparnasse slipped out of Javert's clutches, and he must wait for another oppor-

tunity to lay hands on that "cursed little fop." Montparnasse, in fact, having met Eponine on the boulevard, keeping watch, went off with her, preferring to play the Nemorino with the daughter rather than Schinderhannes with the father, and it was lucky for him that he did so, as he was now free. As for Eponine, Javert "nailed" her, but it was a poor consolation, and sent her to join Azelma at the Madelonnettes. Lastly, in the drive from No. 50-52 to La Force, one of the chief men arrested, Claquesous, had disappeared; no one knew how he did it, and the sergeants and agents did not at all understand it: he had turned into vapour, slipped through the handcuffs, and passed through a crack in the coach; but no one could say anything except that on reaching the prison there was no Claquesous. There was in this either enchantment or a police trick. Had Claquesous melted away in the darkness like a snow-flake in the water? was there an unavowed connivance on the part of the agents? did this man belong to the double enigma of disorder and order? Had this Sphinx its front paws in crimes, and its hind paws in the police? Javert did not accept these combinations, and struggled against such compromises; but his squad contained other inspectors beside himself, and though his subordinates, perhaps more thoroughly initiated in the secrets of the Prefecture, and Claquesous was such a villain that he might be a very excellent agent. To be on such intimate relations with the night is capital for brigands and admirable for the police, and there are double-edged rogues of the sort. However this might be, Claquesous was lost and could not be found, and Javert seemed more irritated than surprised. As for Marius, "that scrub of a barrister who was probably frightened," and whose name he had forgotten, Javert did not trouble himself much about him, and, besides, a barrister can always be found. But, was he only a barrister?

The examination began, and the magistrate thought it advisable not to put one of the members of the Patron Minette in solitary confinement, as it was hoped he might chatter. This was Brujon, the hairy man of the Rue du Petit Banquier; he was turned into the Charlemagne Court, and the eyes of the spies were kept upon him. This name of Brujon is one of the recollections of La Force. In the hideous yard called the new building—which the governor named the Court of St Bernard, and the robbers christened the Lion's den, and on the wall covered with scars and leprosy, that rose on the left to the height of the roof and close to a rusty old iron gate which led to the old chapel of the Hotel de la Force, converted into a dormitory for prisoners—there might have been seen, twelve years

ago, a species of Bastille, clumsily engraved with a nail in the stone, and beneath it this signature,

BRUJON, 1811.

The Brujon of 1811 was the father of the Brujon of 1832. The latter, of whom we could only catch a glimpse in the garret, was a very crafty and artful young fellow, with a downcast and plaintive air. It was in consequence of this air that the magistrate turned him loose, believing him more useful in the Charlemagne yard than in a secret cell. Robbers do not interrupt their labours because they are in the hands of justice, and do not trouble themselves about such a trifle. Being in prison for one crime does not prevent another being commenced. There are artists who have a picture in the Exhibition, but for all that work at a new one in their studio. Brujon seemed stupefied by prison; he might be seen standing for hours in the yard near the canteen man's stall, gazing like an idiot at the duty list of prices, which began with *garlic, fifty-two centimes*, and ended with *cigar, five centimes*. Or else he passed his time in trembling, shaking his teeth, declaring he had the fever, and inquiring whether one of the twenty-six beds in the Infirmary were vacant.

All at once, toward the second half of February, 1832, it was discovered that Brujon, the sleepy-looking man, had had three messages delivered, not in his own name, but in those of his comrades, by the prison porters. These messages had cost him fifty sous altogether, an exorbitant sum, which attracted the corporal's attention. After making inquiries and consulting the tariff of messages hung up in the prisoners' visiting room, this authority found out that the fifty sous were thus divided,—one message to the Pantheon, ten sous; one to Val de Grâce, fifteen sous; and one to the Barrière de Grenelle, twenty-five sous, the latter being the dearest in the whole list. Now at these very places resided these very dangerous prowlers at the barrière, Kruideniers *alias* Bizarro, Glorious an ex-convict, and Stop-the-coach, and the attention of the police was directed to these through this incident. It was assumed that these men belonged to the Patron Minette, of which band two chiefs, Babet and Gueulemer, were locked up. It was supposed that Brujon's messages, which were not delivered at the houses, but to persons waiting in the street, contained information about some meditated crime. The three ruffians were arrested, and the police believed they had scented some machination of Brujon's.

A week after these measures had been taken, a night

watchman, who was inspecting the ground-floor sleeping ward of the New Building, was just placing his chestnut in the box—this was the method employed to make sure that the turnkeys did their duty properly; every hour a chestnut must be dropped into all the boxes nailed on the doors of the sleeping wards—when he saw through the trap Brujon sitting up in bed and writing something. The turnkey went in, Brujon was placed in solitary confinement for a month, but what he had written could not be found. Hence the police were just as wise as before. One thing is certain, that on the next day a "Postillion" was thrown from Charlemagne into the Lion's den over the five-storeyed building that separated the two yards. Prisoners give the name of "Postillion" to a ball of artistically moulded bread, which is sent to "Ireland," that is to say, thrown from one yard into another. This ball falls into the yard, the man who picks it up opens it and find in it a note addressed to some prisoner in the yard. If it be a prisoner who finds the note he delivers it to the right address; if it be a turnkey, or one of those secretly-bought prisoners, called "sheep" in prisons, and "foxes" at the galleys, the note is carried to the wicket and delivered to the police. This time the postillion reached its address, although the man for whom it was intended was at the time in a separate cell. This person was no other than Babet, one of the four heads of Patron Minette. It contained a rolled-up paper, on which only two lines were written.

"Babet, there's a job to be done in the Rue Plumet, a gate opening on the garden."

It was what Brujon had written during the night. In spite of male and female searchers, Babet contrived to send the note from La Force to the Salpêtrière to a "lady friend" of his locked up there. She in her turn handed the note to a girl she knew of the name of Magnon, whom the police were actively seeking, but had not yet arrested. This Magnon, of whose name the reader has already caught a glimpse, was closely connected with the Thénardiens, as we shall show presently, and by going to see Eponine was able to serve as a bridge between the Salpêtrière and the Madelonnettes. At this very period Eponine and Azelma were discharged for want of evidence, and when Eponine went out, Magnon, who was watching for her at the gate of the Madelonnettes, handed her the note from Brujon to Babet, with instructions to look into the affair. Eponine went to the Rue Plumet, recognized the grating and the garden, observed the house, watched for some days, and then carried to Magnon a biscuit, which the latter sent to Babet's mistress at the Salpê-

trière. A biscuit, in the dark language of prisons, means, "Nothing to be done."

In less than a week from this Babet and Brujon happened to meet, as one was going before the magistrate, the other returning. "Well," Brujon asked, "the Rue P.?" "Biscuit," Babet answered. Thus the foetus of crime engendered by Brujon at La Force became abortive; but this abortion had consequences, for all that, perfectly strange to Brujon's plans, as will be seen. In fancying we are tying one thread we often tie another.

CHAPTER LXXVII.

PÈRE MABŒUF HAS AN APPARITION.

MARIUS no longer called on any one, but at times he came across Father Mabœuf. While Marius was slowly descending the mournful steps which might be called the cellar stairs, and lead to places without light, on which you hear the footsteps of the prosperous above your head, M. Mabœuf was also descending. The *Flora* of Cauteretz did not sell at all now, and the indigo experiments had not been successful in the little garden of Austerlitz, which looked in a bad direction. M. Mabœuf could only cultivate in it a few rare plants which are fond of moisture and shade. For all that, though, he was not discouraged: he had obtained a strip of ground at the Jardin des Plantes, on which to carry on his experiments "at his own charge." To do this he pledged the plates of his *Flora*, and he reduced his breakfast to two eggs, of which he left one for his old servant, whose wages he had not paid for fifteen months past. And very frequently his breakfast was his sole meal. He no longer laughed with his childish laugh, he had grown morose, and declined to receive visitors, and Marius did well not to call on him. At times, at the hour when M. Mabœuf proceeded to the Jardin des Plantes, the old man and the young man passed each other on the Boulevard de l'Hôpital; they did not speak, and merely shook their heads sorrowfully. It is a sad thing that the moment arrives when misery parts friends!

Royol the publisher was dead, and now M. Mabœuf knew nothing but his books, his garden, and his indigo; these were the three shapes which happiness, pleasure, and hope had as-

sumed for him. They were sufficient to live, and he would say to himself, "When I have made my blue-balls, I shall be rich; I will redeem my plates from the Mont de Piété, bring my *Flora* into fashion again with charlatanism, the big drum, and advertisements in the papers, and buy, I know where, a copy of Pierre de Medine's Art of Navigation, with woodcuts, edition 1539." In the mean while, he toiled all day at his indigo patch, and at night went home to water his garden and read his books. M. Mabœuf at this period was close on eighty years of age.

One evening he had a strange apparition. He had returned home while it was still daylight, and found that Mother Plutarch, whose health was not so good as it might be, had gone to bed. He dined upon a bone on which a little meat remained and a lump of bread which he had found on the kitchen table, and was seated on a stone post which acted as a bench in his garden. Near this bench there was, after the fashion of old kitchen gardens, a sort of tall building of planks in a very rickety condition, a hutch on the ground-floor, and a store-room on the first floor. There were no rabbits in the hutch, but there were a few apples, the remnant of the winter stock, in the store-room. M. Mabœuf was reading, with the help of his spectacles, two books in which he took great interest, for his natural timidity rendered him prone to accept superstitions. The first of these books was the celebrated treatise of President Delancré, "On the Inconstancy of Delusions," and the other was the quarto work of Mutor de la Rubandière, "On the Demons of Vauvert and the goblins of la Bièvre." The latter book interested him the more, because his garden had been in olden times one of the places haunted by the goblins. Twilight was beginning to whiten what is above and blacken what is below. While reading M. Mabœuf looked over the book which he held in his hand at his plants, and among others at a magnificent rhododendron, which was one of his consolations. Four days of wind and sun had passed without a drop of rain, the stems were bending, the buds drooping, the leaves falling, and they all required watering; this rhododendron especially looked in a very sad way. M. Mabœuf was one of those men for whom plants have souls; he had been at work all day in his indigo patch, and was worn out with fatigue, but for all that he rose, laid his books on the bench, and walked in a bent posture, and with tottering steps, up to the well. But when he seized the chain he had not sufficient strength to unhook it; he then turned and took a glance of agony at the sky, which was glittering with stars. The evening had that serenity which crushes human sorrow under a lugubrious

and eternal joy. The night promised to be as dry as the day had been.

"Stars everywhere!" the old man thought, "not the smallest cloud! not a drop of water!"

And his head, which had been raised a moment before, fell again on his chest, then he looked once more at the sky, murmuring,—

"A little dew! a little pity!"

He tried once again to unhook the well-chain, but could not succeed; at this moment he heard a voice, saying,—

"Father Mabœuf, shall I water the garden for you?" At the same time a sound like that of a wild beast breaking through was heard in the hedge, and he saw a tall thin girl emerge, who stood before him looking at him boldly. She looked less like a human being than some form engendered of the darkness. Ere Father Mabœuf, whom, as we said, a trifle terrified, found time to answer a syllable, this creature, whose movements had in the gloom a sort of strange suddenness, had unhooked the chain, let down and drawn up the bucket, and filled the watering-pot; and the old gentleman saw this apparition, which was bare-footed and wore a ragged skirt, running along the flower-beds and distributing life around her. The sound of the water pattering on the leaves filled M. Mabœuf's soul with ravishment, and the rhododendron now seemed to him to be happy. The first bucket emptied, the girl drew a second, then a third, and watered the whole garden. To see her moving thus along the walks in which her outline appeared quite black, and waving on her long thin arms her ragged shawl, she bore a striking resemblance to a bat. When she had finished, Father Mabœuf went up to her with tears in his eyes, and laid his hand on her forehead.

"God will bless you," he said, "you are an angel, since you take care of flowers."

"No," she replied, "I am the devil, but I don't care."

The old man continued, without waiting for or hearing the reply,—

"What a pity that I am so unhappy and so poor, and can do nothing for you!"

"You can do something," she said.

"What is it!"

"Tell me where M. Marius lives."

The old man did not understand.

"What Monsieur Marius?"

He raised his glassy eyes and seemed seeking something which had vanished.

"A young man who used to come here."

"Ah, yes," he exclaimed, "I know whom you mean. Wait a minute? Monsieur Marius, Baron Marius Pontmercy, *par-dieu*! lives, or rather he does not live—well, I do not know."

While speaking, he had stooped to straighten a rhododendron branch, and continued,—

"Ah yes, I remember now. He passes very frequently along the boulevard, and goes in the direction of the Lark's field in the Rue Croule Barbe. Look for him there, he will not be difficult to find."

When M. Mabœuf raised his head again, he was alone, and the girl had disappeared. He was decidedly a little frightened.

"Really," he thought, "if my garden were not watered, I should fancy that it was a ghost."

An hour after, when he was in bed, this idea returned to him, and while falling asleep, he said to himself confusedly at the disturbed moment when thought gradually assumes the form of dream in order to pass through sleep, like the fabulous bird, which metamorphoses itself into a fish to cross the sea,—

"Really now, this affair greatly resembles what la Rubandière records about the goblins. Could it have been a ghost?"

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

MARIUS HAS AN APPARITION.

A FEW days after this visit of a ghost to Father Mabœuf—it was on a Monday, the day of the five-franc piece, which Marius borrowed of Courfeyrac for Thénadier, Marius placed the coin in his pocket, and before carrying it to the prison, resolved to "take a little walk," hoping that on his return this would make him work. It was, however, everlastingly so. As soon as he rose, he sat down before a book and paper to set about some translation, and his job at this time was the translation into French of a celebrated German quarrel, the controversy between Gans and Savigny. He took up Gans, he took up Savigny, read four pages, tried to write one but could not, saw a star between his paper and himself, and got up from his chair,

saying, "I will go out, that will put me in the humour," and he proceeded to the Lark's field, where he saw the star more than ever, and Gans and Savigny less. He went home, tried to resume his task, and did not succeed; he could not join a single one of the threads broken in his brain, and so said to himself, "I will not go out to-morrow, for it prevents me from working." But he went out every day.

He lived in the Lark's field more than at Courfeyrac's lodging, and his right address was Boulevard de la Santé, at the seventh tree past the Rue Croule Barbe. On this morning he had left the seventh tree and was seated on the parapet of the bridge over the little stream. The merry sunbeams were flashing through the expanded and luminous leaves. He thought of "Her," and his reverie, becoming a reproach, fell back on himself; he thought bitterly of the indolence and mental paralysis which were gaining on him, and of the night which constantly grew denser before him, so that he could no longer even see the sun. Still, through this painful evolverment of indistinct ideas which was not even a soliloquy, as action was so weak in him, and he had no longer the strength to try and feel sad; through this melancholy absorption, we say, sensations from without reached him. He heard behind, below, and on both sides of him, the washerwomen of the Gobelins beating their linen, and above him the birds twittering and singing in the elms. On one side the sound of liberty, happy carelessness and winged leisure, on the other the sound of labour. Two joyous sounds made him think deeply and almost reflect. All at once he heard amid his poignant ecstasy a familiar voice saying,—

"Ah! here he is!"

He raised his eyes and recognized the unhappy girl who had come to him one morning, Éponine, the elder of Thénardier's daughters; he now knew what her name was. Strange to say, she had grown poorer and more beautiful, two things which he had not thought possible. She had accomplished a double progress, toward light and toward distress. Her feet were bare and her clothes torn, as on the day when she so boldly entered his room, but the rags were two months older and the holes larger. She had the same hoarse voice, the same forehead wrinkled and bronzed by exposure, the same free, absent, and wandering look, but she had, in addition, on her countenance, something startled and lamentable, which passing through prisons adds to misery. She had pieces of straw and hay in her hair, not that, like Ophelia, she had gone mad through contagion with Hamlet's lunacy, but because she had slept in

some stable-loft, and with all that she was beautiful. Oh youth, what a star art thou! She had stopped in front of Marius with a little joy on her livid face, and something like a smile, and it was some minutes ere she could speak.

"I have found you!" she said at last. "Father Mabœuf was right, it was in this boulevard! How I have sought you, if you only knew! Do you know that I have been in quod for a fortnight! They let me go as there was no charge against me, and besides I had not attained years of discretion by two months. Oh how I have looked for you the last six weeks! So you no longer live down there?"

"No," said Marius.

"Ah, I understand, on account of that thing; well, such disturbances are unpleasant, and you moved. Hilloh, why do you wear an old hat like that? a young man like you ought to be handsomely dressed. Do you know, Monsieur Marius, that M. Mabœuf calls you Baron Marius—I forget what, but you are not a Baron are you? Barons are old swells, who walk in front of the Luxembourg palace, where there is the most sun, and read the *Quotidienne* for a sou. I went once with a letter for a Baron who was like that, and more than a hundred years of age. Tell me, where do you live now?"

Marius did not answer.

"Ah," she added, "you have a hole in your shirt-front, I must mend it for you."

Then she continued with an expression which gradually grew gloomier,—

"You do not seem pleased to see me?"

Marius held his tongue. She was also silent for a moment, and then exclaimed,—

"If I liked, I could compel you to look pleased."

"What do you mean?" Marius asked.

She bit her lip, and apparently hesitated, as if suffering from some internal struggle. At length she seemed to make up her mind.

"All the worse, but no matter, you look sad and I wish you to be pleased, only promise me, though, that you will laugh, for I want to see you laugh and hear you say, 'Ah! that is famous!' Poor M. Marius! you know you promised you would give me all I wanted."

"Yes, but speak, can't you?"

She looked at M. Marius intently and said, "I have the address."

Marius turned pale, and all his blood flowed to his heart.

"What address?"

"The address which you asked me for;" and she added, as if with a great effort, "the address—you know?"

"Yes," Marius stammered.

"The young lady's."

These words uttered, she heaved a deep sigh. Marius leapt from the parapet on which he was sitting and wildly seized her hand.

"Oh! lead me to it! tell me! ask of me what you please! where is it?"

"Come with me," she answered; "I don't exactly know the street or the number, and it is quite on the other side of town, but I know the house well, and will take you to it."

She withdrew her hand, and continued in a tone which would have made an observer's heart bleed, but did not at all affect the intoxicated and transported lover,—

"Oh, how pleased you are!"

A cloud passed over Marius' forehead, and he clutched Eponine's arm.

"Swear one thing."

"Swear?" she said, "what do you mean by that? what would you have me swear?"

And she burst into a laugh.

"Your father! promise me, Eponine, swear to me that you will never tell your father that address."

She turned to him with an air of stupefaction. "Eponine! how do you know that is my name?"

"Promise me what I ask you."

But she did not seem to hear him.

"That is nice! you called me Eponine!"

Marius seized both her arms.

"Answer me in Heaven's name! pay attention to what I am saying,—swear to me that you will not tell your father the address which you know."

"My father?" she remarked, "oh yes, my father. He's all right in a secret cell. Besides, what do I care for my father!"

"But you have not promised!" Marius exclaimed.

"Let me go!" she said, as she burst into a laugh, "how you are shaking me! Yes, yes, I promise it, I swear it! how does it concern me? I will not tell my father the address. There, does that suit you, is that it?"

"And no one else?" said Marius.

"And no one else."

"Now," Marius continued, "lead me there."

"At once?"

"Yes."

"Come on! Oh, how glad he is!" she said.

A few yards further on she stopped.

"You are following me too closely, M. Marius; let me go on in front and do you follow me, as if you were not doing so. A respectable young man like you must not be seen with such a woman as I am."

No language could render all that was contained in the word "woman," thus pronounced by this child. She went a dozen paces and stopped again. Marius rejoined her, and she said to him aside without turning to him,—

"By the by, you know that you promised me something?"

Marius felt in his pocket; he had nothing in the world but the five-franc piece destined for father Thénardier, but he laid the coin in Eponine's hand. She let it slip through her fingers on the ground, and looking at him frowningly said,—

"I do not want your money."

CHAPTER LXXIX.

THE MYSTERIOUS HOUSE.

ABOUT the middle of the last century a president of the Parliament of Paris who kept a mistress under the rose, for at that day the nobility displayed their mistresses and the bourgeois concealed theirs, had "a small house," built in the Faubourg St Germain, in the deserted Rue de Blomet, which is now called Rue Plumet, and not far from the spot which was formerly known as the "fight of animals." This house consisted of a pavilion only one storey in height, there were two sitting-rooms on the ground-floor, two bed-rooms on the first, a kitchen below, a boudoir above, an attic beneath the roof, and the whole was surrounded by a large garden with railings looking out on the street. This was all that passers-by could see. But behind the pavilion was a narrow yard, with an outhouse containing two rooms, where a nurse and a child could be concealed if necessary. In the back of this outhouse was a secret door leading into a long, paved winding passage, open to the sky, and bordered by two lofty walls. This passage, concealed with prodigious art, and, as it were, lost between the garden walls, whose every turn and winding it followed, led to another secret door, which opened about a quarter of a mile off

almost in another quarter, at the solitary end of the Rue de Babylone. The President went in by this door, so that even those who might have watched him, and observed that he mysteriously went somewhere every day, could not have suspected that going to the Rue de Babylone was going to the Rue Blomet. By clever purchases of ground, the ingenious magistrate had been enabled to make this hidden road upon his own land, and consequently uncontrolled. At a later date he sold the land bordering the passage in small lots for gardens, and the owners of these gardens on either side believed that they had a parting-wall before them, and did not even suspect the existence of this long strip of pavement winding between two walls among their flower-beds and orchards. The birds alone saw this curiosity, and it is probable that the linnets and tom-tits of the last century gossiped a good deal about the President.

The pavilion, built of stone, in the Mansard taste, and panelled and furnished in the Watteau style, rock-work outside, periwig within, and begirt by a triple hedge of flowers, had something discreet, coquettish, and solemn about it, befitting the caprices of love and a magistrate. This house and this passage, which have now disappeared, still existed fifteen years ago. In '93 a brazier bought the house for the purpose of demolishing it, but as he could not pay, the nation made him bankrupt, and thus it was the house that demolished the brazier. Since then the house had remained uninhabited, and fell slowly into ruins, like every residence to which the presence of man no longer communicates life. The old furniture was left in it, and the ten or twelve persons who pass along the Rue Plumet were informed that it was for sale or lease by a yellow and illegible placard which had been fastened to the garden gate since 1810. Toward the end of the Restoration the same passers-by might have noticed that the bill had disappeared, and even that the first-floor shutters were open. The house was really occupied, and there were short curtains at the windows, a sign that there was a lady in the house. In October, 1829, a middle-aged man presented himself and took the house as it stood, including of course the outhouse and the passage leading to Rue de Babylone, and he had the two secret doors of this passage put in repair. The house was still furnished much as the President had left it, so the new tenant merely ordered a few necessary articles, had the paving of the yard put to rights, new stairs put in, and the windows mended, and eventually installed himself there with a young girl and an old woman, without any disturbance, and rather like a man slipping

in than one entering his own house. The neighbours, however, did not chatter, for the simple reason that he had none.

The tenant was in reality Jean Valjean, and the girl was Cosette. The domestic was a female of the name of Toussaint, whom Jean Valjean had saved from the hospital and wretchedness, and who was old, rustic, and stammered, three qualities which determined Jean Valjean on taking her with him. He hired the house in the name of M. Fauchelevent, annuitant. In all we have recently recorded the reader will have doubtless recognized Valjean even sooner than Thénardier did. Why had he left the convent of the Little Picpus, and what had occurred there? Nothing had occurred. It will be borne in mind that Jean Valjean was happy in the convent, so happy that his conscience at last became disturbed by it. He saw Cosette daily, he felt paternity springing up and being developed in him more and more; he set his whole soul on the girl; he said to himself that she was his, that no power on earth could rob him of her, that it would be so indefinitely, that she would certainly become a nun, as she was daily gently urged to it, that henceforth the convent was the world for him as for her, that he would grow old in it and she grow up, that she would grow old and he die there; and that, finally, no separation was possible. While reflecting on this, he began falling into perplexities: he asked himself if all this happiness were really his, if it were not composed of the happiness of this child, which he confiscated and deprived her of, and whether this were not a robbery? He said to himself that this child had the right to know life before renouncing it, that depriving her beforehand, and without consulting her, of all joys under the pretext of saving her from all trials, and profiting by her ignorance and isolation to make an artificial vocation spring up in her, was denaturalizing a human creature and being false to God. And who knew whether Cosette, some day meditating on this, and feeling herself a reluctant nun, might not grow to hate him? It was a last thought, almost selfish and less heroic than the others, but it was insupportable to him. He resolved to leave the convent.

He resolved, and recognized with a breaking heart that he must do so. As for objections, there were none, for six years of residence between these walls, and of disappearance, had necessarily destroyed or dispersed the element of fear. He could return to human society at his ease, for he had grown old and all had changed. Who would recognize him now? And then, looking at the worst, there was only danger for himself, and he had not the right to condemn Cosette to a cloister, for the reason that he had been condemned to the galleys; besides,

what is danger in the presence of duty ? Lastly, nothing prevented him from being prudent and taking precautions ; and as for Cosette's education, it was almost completed and terminated. Once the resolution was formed, he awaited the opportunity, which soon offered ; old Fauchelevent died. Jean Valjean requested an audience of the reverend Prioress, and told her that as he had inherited a small property by his brother's death, which would enable him to live without working, he was going to leave the convent, and take his daughter with him ; but as it was not fair that Cosette, who was not going to profess, should have been educated gratuitously, he implored the reverend Prioress to allow him to offer the community, for the five years which Cosette had passed among them, the sum of five thousand francs. It was thus that Jean Valjean quitted the convent of the Perpetual Adoration.

On leaving it he carried with his own hands, and would not intrust to any porter, the small valise, of which he always had the key about him. This valise perplexed Cosette, owing to the aromatic smell which issued from it. Let us say at once that this trunk never quitted him again, he always had it in his bed-room, and it was the first, and at times the only, thing which he carried away in his removals. Cosette laughed, called this valise the inseparable, and said, " I am jealous of it." Jean Valjean, however, felt a profound anxiety when he returned to the outer air. He discovered the house in the Rue Plumet, and hid himself in it, henceforth remaining in possession of the name of Ultime Fauchelevent. At the same time he hired two other lodgings in Paris, so that he might attract less attention than if he had always remained in the same quarter ; that he might, if necessary, absent himself for a while if anything alarmed him ; and, lastly, that he might not be taken unaware, as on the night when he so miraculously escaped from Javert. These two lodgings were of a very mean appearance, and in two quarters very distant from each other, one being in the Rue de l'Ouest, the other in the Rue de l'Homme-armé. He spent a few weeks now and then at one or the other of these lodgings, taking Cosette with him and leaving Toussaint behind. He was waited on by the porters, and represented himself as a person living in the country, who had a lodging in town. This lofty virtue had three domiciles in Paris in order to escape the police.

CHAPTER LXXX.

JEAN VALJEAN A NATIONAL GUARD.

PROPERLY speaking, however, Jean Valjean's house was at the Rue Plumet, and he had arranged his existence there in the following fashion :—Cosette and the servant occupied the pavilion, she had the best bed-room, with the painted press, the boudoir with the gilt beading, the President's drawing-room with its hangings and vast easy chairs, and the garden. Jean Valjean placed in Cosette's room a bed with a canopy of old damask in three colours, and an old and handsome Persian carpet, purchased at mother Gauchér's in the Rue Fiquier Saint Paul, while, to correct the sternness of these old splendours, he added all the light gay furniture of girls, an etagère, book-shelves with gilt books, a desk and blotting-case, a work-table inlaid with mother-of-pearl, a silver dressing-case, and toilette articles of Japanese china. Long damask curtains of three colours, like those on the bed, festooned the first-floor windows, while on the ground-floor they were of tapestry. All through the winter Cosette's small house was warmed from top to bottom, while Valjean himself lived in the sort of porter's lodge at the end of the back yard, which was furnished with a mattress and common bedstead, a deal table, two straw-bottomed chairs, an earthenware water-jug, a few books on a plank, and his dear valise in a corner, but he never had any fire. He dined with Cosette, and black bread was put on the table for him; and he had said to Toussaint, when she came, "This young lady is mistress of the house." "And you, sir?" Toussaint replied, quite stupefied. "Oh! I am much better than the master, —I am the father."

Cosette had been taught house-keeping in the convent, and checked the expenses, which were very small. Daily Jean Valjean took Cosette for a walk, leading to the most sequestered allée of the Luxembourg, and every Sunday they attended Mass at the Church of St Jacques du Haut-pas, because it was a long distance off. As it is a very poor district, he gave away a considerable amount of alms, and the wretched flocked around him in the church, which caused Thénardier to head his letter to him in the way we have seen. He was fond of

taking Cosette to visit the indigent and the sick, but no stranger ever entered the house in the Rue Plumet. Toussaint bought the provision, and Jean Valjean himself fetched the water from a fountain close by, on the boulevard. The wood and wine were kept in a semi-subterranean building covered with rock-work, near the door in the Rue Babylone, and which had formerly served the President as a grotto, for in the age of the Follies and small houses, love was not possible without a grotto. In the door opening on the Rue Babylone there was a letter-box, but, as the inhabitants of the house in the Rue Plumet received no letters, this box, once on a time the go-between in amourettes, and the confidant of a love-sick lawyer, was now only of service to receive the tax-papers and the guard-summonses. For M. Fauchelevent, annuitant, belonged to the National Guard, and had been unable to escape the close meshes of the census of 1831. The municipal inquiries made at that period extended even to the convent of the Little Picpus, whence Jean Valjean emerged venerable in the sight of the Major, and consequently worthy of mounting guard. Three or four times a year Jean Valjean donned his uniform and went on duty, and did so readily enough, for it was a disguise which enabled him to mix with everybody, while himself remaining solitary. Jean Valjean had attained his sixtieth year, or the age of legal exemption; but he did not look more than fifty; besides, he had no wish to escape his Sergeant-major and cheat Count Lobau. He had no civil status, hid his name, his identity, his age, everything, and, as we just said, he was a willing National Guard; all his ambition was to resemble the first-comer who pays taxes. The ideal of this man was internally an angel, externally a bourgeois.

Let us mention one fact, by the way. When Jean Valjean went out with Cosette he dressed himself in the way we have seen, and looked like a retired officer, but when he went out alone, and he did so usually at night, he was attired in a workman's jacket and trousers, and a cap whose peak was pulled deep over his eyes. Was this precaution or humility? Both at once. Cosette was accustomed to the enigmatical side of her destiny, and hardly noticed her father's singularities; as for Toussaint, she revered Jean Valjean, and considered everything he did right. One day her butcher, who got a glimpse of her master, said, "He's a queer-looking stick," and she replied, "He's a—a—a saint." All three never left the house except by the gate in the Rue de Babylone; and unless they were noticed through the garden gate it would be difficult to guess

that they lived in the Rue Plumet. This gate was always locked, and Jean Valjean left the garden untended that it might not be noticed. In this, perhaps, he deceived himself.

CHAPTER LXXXI.

FOLIIS AC FRONDIBUS.

THIS garden, left to itself for more than half a century, had become extraordinary and charming: passers-by forty years ago stopped in the street to gaze at it, without suspecting the secrets which it hid behind its fresh green screen. More than one dreamer at that day allowed his eyes and thoughts indiscreetly to penetrate the bars of the old locked, twisted, shaky gate, which hung from two mould-covered pillars and was surmounted by a pediment covered with undecipherable arabesques. There was a stone bank in a corner, there were one or two mouldering statues, and some trellis-work, unnailed by time, was rotting against the walls; there was no turf or walk left, but there was dog's-grass everywhere. The artificiality of gardening had departed, and nature had returned; weeds were abundant, and the festival of the gilly-flowers was splendid there. Nothing in this garden impeded the sacred efforts of things toward life, and growth was at home there, and held high holiday. The trees had bent down to the briars, the briars had mounted toward the trees; the plants had clambered up, the branches had bent down. What crawls on the ground had gone to meet what expands in the air, and what floats in the wind stooped down to what drags along the moss; brambles, branches, leaves, fibres, tufts, twigs, tendrils, and thorns were mixed together, wedded and confounded; vegetation had celebrated and accomplished here, in a close and profound embrace, and beneath the satisfied eye of the Creator, the holy mystery of its fraternity, which is a symbol of human paternity. This garden was no longer a garden, but a colossal thicket; that is to say, something which is as impenetrable as a forest, as populous as a city, as rustling as a nest, as dark as a cathedral, as fragrant as a bouquet, as solitary as a tomb, and as lively as a crowd.

In spring this enormous thicket, at liberty within its four walls, played its part in the dull task of universal germination,

and quivered in the rising sun almost like the animal that respires the effluvia of cosmic love, and feels the sap of April ascending and boiling in its veins. Shaking in the wind its prodigious locks of verdure, the thicket scattered over the damp ground, the weather-beaten statues, the crumbling steps of the pavilion, and even over the pavement of the deserted street, constellations of flowers, pearls of dew, fecundity, beauty, life, joy, and perfumes. At mid-day thousands of white butterflies took refuge in it, and it was a divine sight to watch this living snow of summer falling in flakes through the shadows. In the pleasant gloom of the foliage a multitude of soft voices gently addressed the soul, and what the twittering forgot to say the buzzing completed. At night a dreamy vapour rose from the garden and enveloped it; a cerecloth of mist, a celestial and calm melancholy, covered it; the intoxicating smell of the honeysuckle and the bind-weed ascended from all sides like an exquisite and subtle poison; the last appeals of the woodpeckers and the goldfinches could be heard, ere they fell asleep under the branches, and the sacred intimacy between the bird and the trees was felt, for by day wings gladden the leaves, and at night the leaves protect the wings. In winter the thicket was black, dank, bristling, and shivering, and allowed a glimpse at the house to be taken. Instead of flowers among the stalks and dew upon the flowers, the long silvery trail of the snails could be seen on the cold, thick bed of yellow leaves; but in any case, under any aspect, and at all seasons, spring, summer, autumn, and winter, this little enclosure respired melancholy contemplation, solitude, liberty, the absence of man and the presence of God, and the old rusty railings had an air of saying, "This garden is mine."

Although the pavement of Paris was all around, the classical and splendid mansions of the Rue de Varennes two yards off, the dome of the Invalides close by, and the Chamber of Deputies no great distance; although the carriages from the Rues de Bourgogne and St Dominique rolled along luxuriously in the vicinity, and yellow, brown, white, and red omnibuses crossed the adjoining square, the Rue Plumet was a desert; and the death of the old proprietors, a revolution which had passed, the overthrow of old fortunes, absence, forgetfulness, and forty years of desertion and widowhood, had sufficed to bring back to this privileged spot ferns, torch-weeds, hemlock, ragwort, tall grass, dock-leaves, lizards, beetles, and restless and rapid insects. A savage and stern grandeur had re-appeared between these four walls, and nature, who disconcerts all the paltry arrangements of man, and is as perfect in the ant as in

the man, had displayed herself in a poor little Parisian garden with as much roughness and majesty as in a virgin forest of the New World. Nothing, in fact, is small, and any one who is affected by the profound penetrations of nature is aware of this fact. Although no absolute satisfaction is granted to philosophy, and though it can no more circumscribe the cause than limit the effect, the contemplator falls into unfathomable ecstasy when he watches all the decomposition of forces which result in unity. Everything labours for everything; algebra is applied to the clouds, the irradiation of the planet benefits the rose, and no thinker would dare to say that the perfume of the hawthorn is useless to the constellations. Who can calculate the passage of a particle? who among us knows whether the creation of worlds are not determined by the fall of grains of sand? Who is acquainted with the reciprocal ebb and flow of the infinitely great and the infinitely little? A maggot is of importance, the little is great and the great little, all is in a state of equilibrium in nature, and this is a terrific vision for the mind. There are prodigious relations between beings and things, and in this inexhaustible total, from the flea to the sun, nothing despises the other, for all have need of each other. Light does not bear into the sky terrestrial perfumes without knowing what to do with them, and night distributes the planetary essence to the sleepy flowers. Every bird that flies has round its foot the thread of infinity; germination is equally displayed in the outburst of a meteor and the peck of the swallow breaking the egg, and it places the birth of a worm and the advent of Socrates in the same parallel; where the telescope ends, the microscope begins, and which of the two has the grandest sight? you can choose. A patch of green mould is a pleiad of flowers, and a nebula is an ant-hill of stars. There is the same and even a more extraordinary promiscuity of the things of the intellect and the facts of the substance, elements and principles are mingled, combined, wedded together, and multiply each other till they lead both the moral and the material world into the same light. In the vast cosmic exchanges universal life comes and goes in unknown quantities, revolving everything in the invisible mystery of effluvia, employing everything, losing not a single dream of a sleep, sowing an animalcula here, crumbling away a star there, oscillating and winding, making of light a force, and of thought an element, disseminated and invisible, and dissolving everything save that geometrical point, the *Ego*; bringing back everything to the atom soul, expanding everything in God; entangling all activities from the highest to the lowest in the obscurity of a

vertiginous mechanism, attaching the flight of an insect to the movement of the earth, and subordinating, perhaps, if only through the identity of the law, the evolution of the comet in the firmament to the rotatory movement of the Infusoria in the drop of water. It is an enormous machinery of cog-wheels, in which the first mover is the gnat, and the last wheel is the Zodiac.

CHAPTER LXXXII.

COSETTE'S GARDEN.

It seemed as if this garden, created in former times to conceal libertine mysteries, had been transformed and become fitting to shelter chaste mysteries. There were no longer any cradles, bowling-greens, covered walks, or grottos; but there was a magnificent tangled obscurity which fell all around, and Paphos was changed into Eden. A penitent feeling had refreshed this retreat, and the coquettish garden, once on a time so compromised, had returned to virginity and modesty. A president assisted by a gardener, a good fellow who believed himself the successor of Lamoignon, and another good fellow who fancied himself the successor of Lenôtre, had turned it about, clipped it, and prepared it for purposes of gallantry, but nature had seized it again, filled it with shadow, and prepared it for love. There was too in this solitude a heart which was quite ready, and love had only to show itself; for there were here a temple composed of verdure, grass, moss, the sighs of birds, gentle shadows, waving branches, and a soul formed of gentleness, faith, candour, hope, aspirations, and illusions.

Cosette left the convent while still almost a child. She was but little more than fourteen, and at the "ungrateful age," as we have said. With the exception of her eyes, she seemed rather ugly than pretty; still she had no ungraceful feature, but she was awkward, thin, timid and bold at the same time, in short, a grown-up little girl. Her education was finished, that is to say, she had been taught religion, and more especially devotion, also "history," that is to say, the thing so called in a convent; geography, grammar, the participles, the kings of France, and a little music, drawing, &c.; but in other respects she was ignorant of everything, which is at once a charm and

a peril. The mind of a young girl ought not to be left in darkness, for at a later date too sudden and quick looming is produced in it as in a *camera obscura*. She should be gently and discreetly enlightened, rather by the reflection of realities than by their direct and harsh light; for this is a useful and gracefully obscure semi-light which dissipates childish fears and prevents falls. There is only the maternal instinct, that admirable intuition into which the recollections of the virgin and the experience of the wife enter, that knows how or of what this semi-light should be composed. Nothing can take the place of this instinct, and in forming a girl's mind, all the nuns in the world are not equal to one mother. Cosette had had no mother, she had only had a great many mothers: as for Jean Valjean, he had within him every possible tenderness and every possible anxiety; but he was only an old man who knew nothing at all. Now, in this work of education, in this serious matter of preparing a woman for life, what knowledge is needed to contend against the other great ignorance which is called innocence! Nothing prepares a girl for passions like the convent, for it directs her thoughts to the unknown. The heart is driven back on itself, and hence come visions, suppositions, conjectures, romances sketched, adventures longed for, fantastic constructions, and edifices built entirely on the inner darkness of the mind, gloomy and secret dwellings in which the passions alone find a lodging so soon as passing through the convent gate allows it. The convent is a compression which must last the whole life, if it is to triumph over the human heart. On leaving the convent, Cosette could not have found anything sweeter or more dangerous than the house in the Rue Plumet. It was the commencement of solitude with the commencement of liberty, a closed garden, but a rich, sharp, voluptuous, and flagrant soul; there were the same dreams as in the convent, but glimpses could be caught of young men,—it was a grating, but it looked on the street. Still, we repeat, when Cosette first came here, she was but a child. Jean Valjean gave over to her this uncultivated garden, and said to her, "Do what you like with it." This amused Cosette, she moved all the tufts and all the stones in search of "beasts;" she played about while waiting till the time came to think, and she loved this garden for the sake of the insects which she found in the grass under her feet, while waiting till she should love it for the sake of the stars she could see through the branches above her head.

And then, too, she loved her father, that is to say, Jean Valjean, with all her soul, with a simple filial passion, which

rendered the worthy man a desired and delightful companion to her. Our readers will remember that M. Madeleine was fond of reading, and Jean Valjean continued in the same track; he had learned to speak well, and he possessed the secret wealth and the eloquence of a humble, true, and self-cultivated intellect. He had retained just sufficient roughness to season his kindness, and he had a rough mind and a soft heart. During their *tête-à-têtes* in the Luxembourg garden he gave her long explanations about all sorts of things, deriving his information from what he had read, and also from what he had suffered. While Cosette was listening to him her eyes vaguely wandered around. This simple man was sufficient for Cosette's thoughts, in the same way as the wild garden was for her eyes. When she had chased the butterflies for a while she would run up to him panting, and say, "Oh! how tired I am!" and he would kiss her forehead. Cosette adored this good man, and she was ever at his heels, for wherever Jean Valjean was, happiness was. As he did not live either in the pavilion or the garden, she was more attached to the paved back-yard than to the flower-laden garden, and preferred the little outhouse with the straw chairs to the large drawing-room hung with tapestry, along which silk-covered chairs were arranged. Jean Valjean at times said to her with a smile of a man who is delighted to be annoyed,—“Come, go to your own rooms! leave me at peace for a little while.”

She scolded him in that charming tender way which is so graceful when addressed by a daughter to a parent.

“Father, I feel very cold in your room; why don't you have a carpet and a stove!”

“My dear child, there are so many persons more deserving than myself who have not even a roof to cover them.”

“Then, why is there fire in my room and everything that I want?”

“Because you are a woman and a child.”

“Nonsense! then men must be cold and hungry?”

“Some men.”

“Very good! I'll come here so often that you will be obliged to have a fire.”

Or else it was,—

“Father, why do you eat such wretched bread as that?”

“Because I do, my daughter.”

“Well, if you eat it I shall eat it too.”

And so to prevent Cosette from eating black bread Jean Valjean ate white. Cosette remembered her childhood but confusedly, and she prayed night and morning for the mother

whom she had never known. The Thénardiens were like two hideous beings seen in a dream, and she merely remembered that she had gone "one day at night" to fetch water in a wood—she thought that it was a long distance from Paris. It seemed to her as if she had commenced life in an abyss, and that Jean Valjean had drawn her out of it, and her childhood produced on her the effect of a time when she had had nought but centipedes, spiders, and snakes around her. When she thought at night before she fell asleep, as she had no very clear idea of being Jean Valjean's daughter, she imagined that her mother's soul had passed into this good man, and had come to dwell near her. When he was sitting down she rested her cheek on his white hair, and silently dropped a tear, while saying to herself, "Perhaps this man is my mother!" Cosette, strange though it is to say, in her profound ignorance, as a girl educated in a convent, and as, too, maternity is absolutely unintelligible to virginity, eventually imagined that she had had as little of a mother as was possible. This mother's name she did not know, and whenever it happened that she spoke to Jean Valjean on the subject he held his tongue. If she repeated her question he answered by a smile, and once, when she pressed him, the smile terminated in a tear. This silence on his part cast a night over Fantine: was it through prudence? was it through respect? or was it through a fear of intrusting this name to the chances of another memory besides his own?

So long as Cosette was young Jean Valjean readily talked to her about her mother, but when she grew up it was impossible for him to do so—he felt as if he dared not do it. Was it on account of Cosette or of Fantine? He felt a species of religious horror at making this shadow enter Cosette's thoughts, and rendering a dead woman a third person in their society. The more sacred this shade was to him, the more formidable was it. He thought of Fantine, and felt himself overwhelmed by the silence. He saw vaguely in the darkness something that resembled a finger laid on a lip. Had all the modesty which was in Fantine, and which, during her existence, came out of her violently, returned after her death, to watch indignantly over the dead woman's peace, and sternly guard her in the tomb? was Jean Valjean himself unconsciously oppressed by it? We who believe in death are not prepared to reject this mysterious explanation, and hence arose the impossibility of pronouncing, even to Cosette, the name of Fantine. One day Cosette said to him,—

"Father, I saw my mother last night in a dream. She had two large wings, and in life she must have been a sainted woman."

"Through martyrdom," Jean Valjean replied. Altogether, though, he was happy; when Cosette went out with him she leant on his arm, proudly and happily, in the fulness of her heart. Jean Valjean felt his thoughts melt into delight at all these marks of such exclusive tenderness, so satisfied with himself alone. The poor wretch inundated with an angelic joy, trembled; he assured himself with transports that this would last his whole life; he said to himself that he had not really suffered enough to deserve such radiant happiness, and he thanked God, in the depths of his soul, for having allowed him, villain as he was, to be thus loved by an innocent being.

CHAPTER LXXXIII.

COSETTE MAKES A DISCOVERY.

ONE day Cosette happened to look at herself in the glass, and said, "Good gracious!" She fancied that she was almost pretty, and this threw her into a singular trouble. Up to this moment she had not thought of her face, and though she saw herself in the mirror she did not look at herself. And, then, she had often been told that she was ugly; Jean Valjean alone would say gently, "Oh no, oh no!" However this might be, Cosette had always believed herself ugly, and had grown up in this idea with the facile resignation of childhood. And now all at once her looking-glass said to her, as Jean Valjean had done, "Oh no!" She did not sleep that night. "Suppose I were pretty," she thought, "how droll it would be if I were pretty!" and she remembered those of her companions whose beauty produced an effect in the convent, and said to herself, "What! I might be like Mademoiselle So-and-so!"

On the next day she looked at herself, but not accidentally, and doubted. "Where was my sense?" she said, "no, I am ugly." She had simply slept badly, her eyes were heavy and her cheeks pale. She had not felt very joyous on the previous day when she fancied herself pretty, but was sad at no longer

believing it. She did not look at herself again, and for upwards of a fortnight tried to dress her hair with her back to the glass. In the evening, after dinner, she usually worked at her embroidery in the drawing-room, while Jean Valjean read by her side. Once she raised her eyes from her work, and was greatly surprised by the anxious way in which her father was gazing at her. Another time she was walking along the street, and fancied she heard some one behind her, whom she did not see, say, "A pretty woman, but badly dressed." "Nonsense," she thought, "it is not I, for I am well dressed and ugly." At that time she wore her plush bonnet and merino dress. One day, at last, she was in the garden, and heard poor old Toussaint saying, "Master, do you notice how pretty our young lady is growing?" Cosette did not hear her father's answer, for Toussaint's words produced a sort of commotion in her. She ran out of the garden up to her room, looked in the glass, which she had not done for three months, and uttered a cry—she had dazzled herself.

She was beautiful and pretty, and could not refrain from being of the same opinion as Toussaint and her glass. Her waist was formed, her skin had grown white, her hair was glossy, and an unknown splendour was lit up in her blue eyes. The consciousness of her beauty came to her fully in a minute, like the sudden dawn of day; others, besides, noticed her, Toussaint said so; it was evidently to herself that the passer-by alluded, and no doubt was possible. She returned to the garden, believing herself a queen, hearing the birds sing, though it was winter, seeing the golden sky, the sun amid the trees, flowers on the shrubs; she was wild, distraught, and in a state of ineffable ravishment. On his side, Jean Valjean experienced a profound and inexplicable contraction of the heart; for some time past, in truth, he had contemplated with terror the beauty which daily appeared more radiant in Cosette's sweet face. It was a laughing dawn for all, but most mournful for him.

Cosette had been for a long time beautiful ere she perceived the fact, but, from the first day, this unexpected light which slowly rose and gradually enveloped the girl's entire person hurt Jean Valjean's sombre eyes. He felt that it was a change in a happy life, so happy that he did not dare stir in it, for fear of deranging it somewhere. This man, who had passed through every possible distress, who was still bleeding from the wounds dealt him by his destiny, who had been almost wicked, and had become almost a saint, who, after dragging the galley chain, was now dragging the invisible but weighty

chain of indefinite infamy; this man whom the law had not liberated, and who might at any moment be recaptured and taken from the obscurity of virtue to the broad daylight of further opprobrium—this man accepted everything, excused everything, pardoned everything, blessed everything, wished everything well, and only asked one thing of Providence, of men, of the laws, of society, of nature, of the world—that Cosette should love him, that Cosette might continue to love him! that God would not prevent the heart of this child turning to him and remaining with him! Loved by Cosette, he felt cured, at rest, appeased, overwhelmed, rewarded, and crowned. With Cosette's love all was well, and he asked no more. Had any one said to him, "Would you like to be better off?" he would have answered, "No." Had God said to him, "Do you wish for heaven?" he would have answered, "I should lose by it." All that could affect this situation, even on the surface, appeared to him the beginning of something else. He had never known thoroughly what a woman's beauty was, but he understood instinctively that it was terrible. This beauty, which continually expanded more triumphantly and superbly by his side, upon the ingenuous and formidable brow of the child, from the depths of his ugliness, old age, misery, reprobation, and despondency, terrified him, and he said to himself, "How beautiful she is! what will become of me?" Here lay the difference between his tenderness and that of a mother; what he saw with agony a mother would have seen with joy.

The first symptoms speedily manifested themselves. From the day when Cosette said to herself, "I am decidedly good looking," she paid attention to her toilet. She remembered the remark of the passer-by—pretty, but badly dressed—a blast of the oracle which passed by her and died out, after depositing in her heart one of those two germs which are destined at a later period to occupy a woman's entire life,—coquettishness. The other is love. With faith in her beauty, all her feminine soul was expanded within her; she had a horror of merinos, and felt ashamed of plush. Her father never refused her anything, and she knew at once the whole science of the hat, the dress, the mantle, the slipper, and the sleeve, of the fabric that suits, and the colour that is becoming, the science which makes the Parisian woman something so charming, profound, and dangerous. The expression "*femme capiteuse*" was invented for the Parisian. In less than a month little Cosette was in this Thebais of the Rue de Babylone, not only one of the prettiest women, which is something, but

one of the best dressed in Paris, which is a great deal more. She would have liked to meet her "passer-by," to see what he would say, and teach him a lesson. The fact is, that she was in every respect ravishing, and could admirably distinguish a bonnet of Gerard's from one of Herbault's. Jean Valjean regarded these ravages with anxiety, and while feeling that he could never do more than crawl or walk at the most, he could see Cosette's wings growing. However, by the simple inspection of Cosette's toilet, a woman would have seen that she had no mother. Certain small proprieties and social conventionalisms were not observed by Cosette; a mother, for instance, would have told her that an unmarried girl does not wear brocade.

The first day that Cosette went out in her dress and cloak of black brocade, and her white crape bonnet, she took Jean Valjean's arm, gay, radiant, blushing, proud, and striking. "Father," she said, "how do you think I look?" Jean Valjean replied, in a voice which resembled the bitter voice of an envier, "Charming." During the walk he was as usual, but when he returned home he asked Cosette,—

"Will you not put on that dress and bonnet, you know which, again?"

This took place in Cosette's room; she returned to the wardrobe in which her boarding-school dress was hanging.

"That disguise?" she said, "how can you expect it, father? oh, no, indeed, I shall never put on those horrors again: with that thing on my head I look a regular dowdy."

Jean Valjean heaved a deep sigh.

From that moment he noticed that Cosette, who hitherto had wished to stay at home, saying, "Father, I amuse myself much better here with you," now constantly asked to go out. In truth, what good is it for a girl to have a pretty face and a delicious toilet if she does not show them? He also noticed that Cosette no longer had the same liking for the back-yard, and at present preferred remaining in the garden, where she walked, without displeasure, near the railings. Jean Valjean never set foot in the garden, but remained in the back-yard, like the dog. Cosette, knowing herself to be beautiful, lost the grace of being ignorant of the fact, an exquisite grace, for beauty heightened by simplicity is ineffable, and nothing is so adorable as a beautiful innocent maiden, who walks along unconsciously, holding in her hand the key of a Paradise. But what she lost in ingenuous grace she regained in a pensive and serious charm. Her whole person, impregnated with the joys

of youth, innocence, and beauty, exhaled a splendid melancholy. It was at this period that Marius saw her again at the Luxembourg, after an interval of six months.

CHAPTER LXXXIV.

THE BATTLE BEGINS.

CosETTE was in her shadow, as Marius was in his, ready prepared to be kindled. Destiny, with its mysterious and fatal patience, brought slowly together these two beings, all charged with, and pining in, the stormy electricity of passion, these two souls which bore love, as the clouds bore thunder, and were destined to come together and be blended in a glance like the clouds in a storm. The power of a glance has been so abused in love-romances that it has been discredited in the end, and a writer dares hardly assert now-a-days that two beings fell in love because they looked at each other. And yet that is the way, and the sole way, in which people fall in love; the rest is merely the rest, and comes afterwards. Nothing is more real than the mighty shocks which two souls give each other by exchanging this spark. At the hour when Cosette unconsciously gave that glance which troubled Marius, Marius did not suspect that he too gave a glance which troubled Cosette. For a long time she had seen and examined him in the way girls see and examine, while looking elsewhere. Marius was still thinking Cosette ugly, when Cosette had already considered Marius handsome, but as the young man paid no attention to her he was an object of indifference. Still she could not refrain from saying to herself that he had silky hair, fine eyes, regular teeth, an agreeable voice, when she heard him talking with his companions, that he perhaps walked badly, but with a grace of his own, that he did not appear at all silly, that his whole person was noble, gentle, simple, and proud, and, lastly, that though he seemed poor he had the bearing of a gentleman.

On the day when their eyes met, and at length suddenly said to each other the first obscure and ineffable things which the eye stammers, Cosette did not understand it at first. She returned pensively to the house in the Rue de l'Ouest, where Jean Valjean was spending six weeks, according to his wont.

When she awoke the next morning she thought of the young stranger, so long indifferent and cold, who now seemed to pay attention to her, and this attention did not appear at all agreeable to her; on the contrary, she felt a little angry with the handsome, disdainful man. A warlike feeling was aroused, and she felt a very childish joy at the thought that she was at length about to be avenged; knowing herself to be lovely, she felt, though in an indistinct way, that she had a weapon. Women play with their beauty as lads do with their knife, and cut themselves with it. Our readers will remember Marius' hesitations, palpitations, and terrors; he remained on his bench, and did not approach, and this vexed Cosette. One day she said to Jean Valjean, "Father, suppose we take a walk in that direction?" Seeing that Marius did not come to her, she went to him, for, in such cases, every woman resembles Mahomet. And then, strange it is, the first symptom of true love in a young man is timidity; in a girl it is boldness. This will surprise, and yet nothing is more simple; the two sexes have a tendency to approach, and each assumes the qualities of the other. On this day Cosette's glance drove Marius mad, while his glance made Cosette tremble. Marius went away confiding, and Cosette restless. Now they adored each other. The first thing that Cosette experienced was a confused and deep sorrow: it seemed to her that her soul had become black in one day, and she no longer recognized herself. The whiteness of the soul of maidens, which is composed of coldness and gaiety, resembles snow; it melts before love, which is its sun.

Cosette knew not what love was, and she had never heard the word uttered in its earthly sense. In the books of profane music which entered the convent, *tambour* or *pandour* was substituted for *amour*. This produced enigmas, which exercised the imagination of the big girls, such as: "Ah! how agreeable the drummer is!" or, "Pity is not a pandour!" But Cosette left the convent at too early an age to trouble herself much about the "drummer," and hence did not know what name to give to that which now troubled her. But are we the less ill through being ignorant of the name of our disease? She loved with the more passion, because she loved in ignorance; she did not know whether it is good or bad, useful or dangerous, necessary or mortal, eternal or transient, permitted or prohibited,—she loved. She would have been greatly surprised had any one said to her, "You do not sleep? that is forbidden. You do not eat? that is very wrong. You have an oppression and beating of the heart? that cannot be tolerated. You blush

and turn pale when a certain person dressed in black appears at the end of a certain green walk? why, that is abominable!" She would not have understood, and would have replied, "How can I be to blame in a matter in which I can do nothing, and of which I know nothing?"

It happened that the love which presented itself was the one most in harmony with the state of her soul; it was a sort of distant adoration, a dumb contemplation, the deification of an unknown man. It was the apparition of youth to youth, the dream of nights become a romance, and remaining a dream, the wished-for phantom at length realized and incarnated, but as yet having no name, or wrong, or flaw, or claim, or defect; in a way, the distant lover who remained idealized, a chimera which assumed a shape. Any more palpable and nearer meeting would at this first stage have startled Cosette, who was still half plunged in the magnifying fog of the cloister. She had all the fears of children and all the fears of nuns blended together, and the essence of the convent, with which she had been impregnated for five years, was still slowly evaporating from her whole person, and making everything tremble around her. In this situation, it was not a lover she wanted, not even an admirer, but a vision, and she began adoring Marius as something charming, luminous, and impossible.

As extreme simplicity trenches on extreme coquetry, she smiled upon him most frankly. She daily awaited impatiently the hour for the walk; she saw Marius, she felt indescribably happy, and sincerely believed that she was expressing her entire thoughts when she said to Jean Valjean, "What a delicious garden the Luxembourg is!" Marius and Cosette were to each other in the night: they did not speak, they did not bow, they did not know each other, but they met: and like the stars in the heavens, which are millions of leagues separate, they lived by looking at each other. It is thus that Cosette gradually became a woman, and was developed into a beautiful and loving woman, conscious of her beauty and ignorant of her love. She was a coquette into the bargain, through her innocence.

CHAPTER LXXXV.

JEAN VALJEAN IS VERY SAD.

ALL situations have their instincts, and old and eternal mother Nature warned Jean Valjean darkly of the presence of Marius. Jean Valjean trembled in the depth of his mind: he saw nothing, knew nothing, and yet regarded with obstinate attention the darkness in which he was, as if he felt on one side something being built up, on the other something crumbling away. Marius, who was also warned by the same mother Nature, did all in his power to conceal himself from the father, but, for all that, Jean Valjean sometimes perceived him. Marius' manner was no longer wise; he displayed clumsy prudence and awkward temerity. He no longer came quite close to them, as he had formerly done, he sat down at a distance, and remained in an ecstasy: he had a book, and pretended to read it; why did he pretend? Formerly he came in an old coat, and now he came every day in his new one. Jean Valjean was not quite sure whether he did not have his hair dressed: he had a strange way of rolling his eyes, and wore gloves: in short, Jean Valjean cordially detested the young man. Cosette did not allow anything to be guessed. Without knowing exactly what was the matter with her, she had a feeling that it was something which must be hidden. There was a parallelism which annoyed Jean Valjean between the taste for dress which had come to Cosette, and the habit of wearing new clothes displayed by this stranger. It was an accident, perhaps—of course it was—but a menacing accident.

He never opened his mouth to Cosette about this stranger. One day, however, he could not refrain, and said, with that vague despair, which suddenly thrusts the probe into its own misfortune, "That young man looks like a pedant." Cosette, a year previously, when still a careless little girl, would have answered, "Oh no, he is very good-looking." Ten years later, with the love of Marius in her heart, she would have replied, "An insufferable pedant, you are quite right." At the present moment of her life and heart, she restricted herself to saying, with supreme calmness, "That young man!" as if she looked at him for the first time in her life. "How stupid I am," Jean Valjean thought, "she had not even noticed him, and now I have pointed him out to her." Oh, simplicity of old people! oh, depth of

children! It is another law of these first years of suffering and care, of these sharp struggles of first love with first obstacles, that the maiden cannot be caught in any snare, while the young man falls into all. Jean Valjean had begun a secret war against Marius, which Marius, in the sublime stupidity of his passion and his age, did not guess. Jean Valjean laid all sorts of snares for him. He changed his hours, he changed his bench, he forgot his handkerchief, and went alone to the Luxembourg, and Marius went headlong into the trap, and to all these notes of interrogation which Jean Valjean planted in the road, he ingenuously answered, "Yes." Cosette, however, remained immured in her apparent carelessness and imperturbable tranquillity, so that Jean Valjean arrived at this conclusion, "That humbug is madly in love with Cosette, but Cosette does not even know that he exists."

For all that, though, he had a painful tremor in his heart, for the minute when Cosette would love might arrive at any instant. Does not all this commence with indifference? Only once did Cosette commit a fault and startle him; he arose from his bench to go home after three hours' sitting, and she said, "What, already?" Jean Valjean did not give up his walks at the Luxembourg, as he did not wish to do anything singular, or arouse Cosette's attention, but during the hours so sweet for the two lovers, while Cosette was sending her smile to the intoxicated Marius, who only perceived this, and now saw nothing more in the world than a radiant adored face, Jean Valjean fixed on Marius flashing and terrible eyes. He who had ended by no longer believing himself capable of a malevolent feeling, had moments when he felt, if Marius were present, as if he were growing savage and ferocious, and those old depths of his soul which had formerly contained so much anger opened again against this young man. It seemed to him as if unknown craters were again being formed within him. What! the fellow was there! What did he come to do? he came to sniff, examine, and attempt; he came to say, Well, why not? he came to prowling round his, Jean Valjean's, life; to prowling round his happiness, and carry it away from him. Jean Valjean added, "Yes, that is it! what does he come to seek? an adventure. What does he want? a love-affair. A love-affair! and I! What? I was first the most wretched of men, and then the most unhappy. I have spent sixty years on my knees, I have suffered all that a man can suffer, I have grown old without ever having been young; I have lived without family, parents, friends, children, or wife; I have left some of my blood on every stone, on every bramble, on every wall; I have been gentle, though men were harsh to me,

and good though they were wicked. I have become an honest man again, in spite of everything ; I have repented of the evil I did, and pardoned the evil done to me, and at the moment when I am rewarded, when all is finished, when I touched my object, when I have what I wish, and it is but fair as I have paid for it and earned it—all this is to fade away, and I am to lose Cosette, my love, my joy, my soul, because it has pleased a long-legged ass to saunter about the Luxembourg garden !”

Then his eyeballs were filled with a mournful and extraordinary brilliancy ; he was no longer a man looking at a man, no longer an enemy looking at an enemy, he was a dog watching a robber. Our readers know the rest. Marius continued to act madly, and one day followed Cosette to the Rue de l'Ouest. Another day he spoke to the porter, and the porter spoke in his turn, and said to Jean Valjean, “Do you happen to know, sir, a curious young man, who has been making inquiries about you ?” The next day Jean Valjean gave Marius that look which Marius at length noticed, and a week later Jean Valjean went away. He made a vow that he would never again set foot in the Rue de l'Ouest or the Luxembourg, and returned to the Rue Plumet. Cosette did not complain, she said nothing, she asked no questions, she did not attempt to discover any motive, for she had reached that stage when a girl fears that her thoughts may be perused, or she may betray herself. Jean Valjean had no experience of these miseries, the only ones which are charming, and the only ones he did not know, and on this account he did not comprehend the grave significance of Cosette's silence. Still he noticed that she became sad, and he became gloomy. Inexperience was contending on both sides. Once he made an essay, by asking Cosette, “Will you go to the Luxembourg ?” A beam illuminated Cosette's pale face ; “Yes,” she said. They went there, but three months had elapsed, and Marius no longer went there—there was no Marius present. The next day Jean Valjean again asked Cosette, “Will you go to the Luxembourg ?” She answered sadly and gently, “No.” Jean Valjean was hurt by the sadness, and heart-broken by the gentleness.

What was taking place in this young and already so impenetrable mind ? what was going to be accomplished ? what was happening to Cosette's soul ? Sometimes, instead of going to bed, Jean Valjean would remain seated by his bedside with his head between his hands, and spent whole nights in asking himself, “What has Cosette on her mind ?” and in thinking of the things of which she might be thinking. Oh !

at such moments what sad glances he turned toward the convent, that chaste summit, that abiding place of angels, that inaccessible glacier of virtue! With what despairing ravishment did he contemplate that garden, full of ignored flowers and immured virgins, where all the perfumes and all the souls ascend direct to heaven! How he adored that Eden, now closed against him for ever, and which he had voluntarily and madly left! How he lamented his self-denial and his madness in bringing Cosette back to the world. He was the poor hero of the sacrifice, seized and hurled down by his own devotion! How he said to himself, What have I done! However, nothing of this was visible to Cosette—neither temper, nor roughness—it was ever the same serene, kind face. Jean Valjean's manner was even more tender and paternal than before; and if anything could have evidenced his joy it was more gentleness.

On her side, Cosette was pining; she suffered from Marius' absence, as she had revelled in his presence, singularly, and not exactly knowing why. When Jean Valjean ceased taking her for her usual walk, a feminine instinct had whispered to her heart that she must not appear to be attached to the Luxembourg, and that if she displayed indifference in the matter her father would take her back to it. But days, weeks, and months, succeeded each other, for Jean Valjean had tacitly accepted Cosette's tacit consent. She regretted it, but it was too late, and on the day when they returned to the Luxembourg, Marius was no longer there. He had disappeared then, it was all over: what could she do? would she ever see him again? She felt a contraction of the heart which nothing dilated and which daily increased: she no longer knew whether it were summer or winter, sunshine or rain, whether the birds were singing, whether it was the dahlia or the daisy season, whether the Luxembourg was more charming than the Tuileries, whether the linen brought home by the washerwoman was too much or insufficiently starched, or if Toussaint had gone to market well or ill: and she remained crushed, absorbed, attentive to one thought alone, with a vague and fixed eye, like a person gazing through the darkness at the deep black spot where a phantom has just vanished. Still she did not allow Jean Valjean to see anything but her pallor, and her face was ever gentle to him. This pallor, though, was more than sufficient to render Jean Valjean anxious, and at times he would ask her,—

“What is the matter with you?”

And she answered,—

“Nothing.”

After a silence, she would add, as if guessing that he was sad too,—

“And, father, is there anything the matter with you?”

“With me? oh nothing,” he would reply.

These two beings, who had loved each other so exclusively, and one of them with such a touching love, and had lived for a long time one through the other, were now suffering side by side, one on account of the other, without confessing it, without anger, and with a smile.

CHAPTER LXXXVI.

THE CHAIN-GANG.

THE more unhappy of the two was Jean Valjean, for youth, even in its sorrow, has always a brilliancy of its own. At certain moments Jean Valjean suffered so intensely that he became childish, for it is the peculiarity of grief to bring out a man's childish side. He felt invincibly that Cosette was slipping from him; and he would have liked to struggle, hold her back, and excite her by some external and brilliant achievement. These ideas, childish as we said, but at the same time senile, gave him, through their very childishness, a very fair notion of the influence of gold lace upon the imagination of girls. One day Count Coutard, Commandant of Paris, passed along the street on horseback, and in full-dress uniform. He envied this gilded man, and said to himself, “What a happiness it would be to be able to put on that coat, which was an undeniable thing; that if Cosette saw him in it it would dazzle her, and when he passed before the Tuileries gates the sentinels would present arms to him, and that would be sufficient for Cosette, and prevent her looking at young men.”

An unexpected shock was mingled with his sad thoughts. In the isolated life they led, and since they had gone to reside in the Rue Plumet, they had one habit. They sometimes had the pleasure of going to see the sun rise, a species of sweet joy, which is agreeable to those who are entering life and those who are leaving it. To walk about at day-break is equivalent, with the man who loves solitude, to walking about at night with the gaiety of nature added. The streets are deserted and the birds sing. Cosette, herself a bird, generally woke at

early hour. These morning excursions were arranged on the previous evening; he proposed and she accepted. This was arranged like a plot; they went out before day, and it was a delight for Cosette, as these innocent eccentricities please youth. Jean Valjean had, as we know, a liking to go to but little frequented places, to solitary nooks, and forgotten spots. There were at that time, in the vicinity of the gates of Paris, poor fields, almost forming part of the city, where sickly wheat grew in summer, and which in autumn, after the harvest was got in, did not look as if they had been reaped, but skinned. Jean Valjean had a predilection for these fields, and Cosette did not feel wearied there; it was solitude for him and liberty for her. There she became a little girl again, she ran about and almost played, she took off her bonnet, laid it on Jean Valjean's knees, and plucked flowers. She watched the butterflies, but did not catch them, for humanity and tenderness spring up with love, and the maiden who has in her heart a trembling and fragile ideal feels pity for the butterfly's wing. She twined poppies into wreaths, which she placed on her head, and when the sun poured its beams on them and rendered them almost purple, they formed a fiery crown for her fresh pink face.

Even after their life had grown saddened they kept up their habit of early walks. One October morning, then, tempted by the perfect serenity of the autumn of 1831, they went out, and found themselves just before daybreak near the Barrière du Maine. It was not quite morning yet, but it was dawn, a ravishing and wild minute. There were a few stars in the pale azure sky, the earth was all black, the heavens all white, a shiver ran along the grass, and all around displayed the mysterious influence of twilight. A lark, which seemed mingled with the stars, was singing at a prodigious height, and it seemed as if this hymn of littleness to infinitude calmed the immensity. In the east the dark mass of Val de Grace stood out against the bright steel blue horizon, and glittering Venus rose behind the dome and looked like a soul escaping from a gloomy edifice. All was peace and silence, there was no one in the highway, and a few workmen, going to their daily toil, could be indistinctly seen in the distance.

Jean Valjean was seated on some planks deposited at the gate of a timber-yard, his face was turned to the road, and his back to the light; he forgot all about the sunrise, for he had fallen into one of those profound reveries in which the mind is concentrated, which imprison even the glance and are equivalent to four walls. There are meditations which may be called

wells, and when you are at the bottom it takes some time to reach the ground again. Jean Valjean had descended into one of these reveries; he was thinking of Cosette, of the possible happiness if nothing came betwixt him and her, of that light with which she filled his life, and which was the breath of his soul. He was almost happy in this reverie, and Cosette, standing by his side, was watching the clouds turn pink. All at once Cosette exclaimed, "Father, there is something coming down there!" Jean Valjean raised his eyes: Cosette was correct. The road which leads to the old Barrière du Maine is a prolongation of the Rue de Sèvres, and is intersected at right angles by the inner boulevard. At the spot where the roads cross, a sound difficult to explain at such an hour could be heard, and a sort of confused mass appeared. Some shapeless thing coming along the boulevard was turning into the main road. It grew larger, and seemed to be moving in an orderly way; although it shook and heaved, it seemed to be a vehicle, but its load could not be distinguished. There were horses, wheels, shouts, and the cracking of whips. By degrees the lineaments became fixed, though drowned in darkness; it was really a vehicle coming toward the barrière near which Jean Valjean was seated; a second resembling it followed, then a third, then a fourth; seven carts debouched in turn, the heads of the horses touching the back of the vehicles. Figures moved on these carts, sparks could be seen in the gloom, looking like bare sabres, and a clang could be heard resembling chains being shaken; all this advanced, the voices became louder, and it was a formidable thing, such as issues from the cavern of dreams.

On drawing nearer this thing assumed a shape, and stood out behind the trees with the lividness of an apparition; the mass grew whiter, and the gradually dawning day threw a ghastly gleam over this mass, which was at once sepulchral and alive,—the heads of the shadows became the faces of corpses, and this is what it was. Seven vehicles were moving in file along the road, and the first six had a singular shape; they resembled brewers' drays, and consisted of long ladders laid upon two wheels, and forming a shaft at the front end. Each dray, or, to speak more correctly, each ladder, was drawn by a team of four horses, and strange clusters of men were dragged along upon these ladders. In the faint light these men could not be seen so much as divined. Twenty-four on each ladder, twelve on either side, leaning against each other, had their faces turned to the passers-by, and their legs hanging down; and they had behind their back something which rang, and

was a chain, and something that glistened, which was a collar. Each man had his collar, but the chain was for all, so that these twenty-four men, if obliged to get down from the dray and walk, were seized by a species of inexorable unity, and were obliged to wind on the ground with the chain as back-bone, very nearly like centipedes. At the front and back of each cart stood two men armed with guns, who stood with their feet on the end of the chain. The seventh vehicle, a vast fourgon, with rack sides but no hood, had four wheels and six horses, and carried a resounding mass of coppers, boilers, chafing-dishes, and chains, among which were mingled a few bound men lying their full length, who seemed to be ill. This fourgon, which was quite open, was lined with broken-down hurdles, which seemed to have been used for old punishments.

These vehicles held the crown of the causeway, and on either side marched a double file of infamous-looking guards, wearing three-cornered hats, like the soldiers of the Directory, and dirty, torn, stained uniforms, half grey and blue, a coat of the Invalides and the trousers of the undertaker's men, red epaulettes, and yellow belts, and were armed with short sabres, muskets, and sticks. These sbirri seemed compounded of the abjectness of the beggar and the authority of the hangman, and the one who appeared their leader held a postillion's whip in his hands. All these details grew more and more distinct in the advancing daylight, and at the head and rear of the train marched mounted gendarmes, with drawn sabres. The train was so long that, at the moment when the first vehicle reached the barrière, the last had scarce turned out of the boulevard. A crowd, which came no one knew whence and formed in a second, as is so common in Paris, lined both sides of the road, and looked. In the side lanes could be heard the shouts of people calling to each other, and the wooden shoes of the kitchen-gardeners running up to have a peep.

The men piled up on the drays allowed themselves to be jolted in silence, and were livid with the morning chill. They all wore canvas trousers, and their naked feet were thrust into wooden shoes, but the rest of their attire was left to the fancy of wretchedness. Their accoutrements were hideously discordant, for nothing is more mournful than the harlequin garb of rags. There were crushed hats, oilskin caps, frightful woollen night-caps, and, side by side with the blouse, an out-at-elbow black coat: some wore women's bonnets, and others had baskets, as head-gear; hairy chests were visible, and through the rents of the clothes tattooing could be distinguished—temples of love, burning hearts and cupids,—but ringworm and

other unhealthy red spots might also be noticed. Two or three had passed a straw rope through the side rail of the dray, which hung down like a stirrup and supported their feet, while one of them held in his hand and raised to his mouth something like a black stone, which he seemed to be gnawing; it was bread he was eating. All the eyes were dry, and either dull or luminous with a wicked light. The escort cursed, but the chained men did not breathe a syllable; from time to time the sound of a blow dealt with a stick on shoulder-blades or heads could be heard: some of these men yawned; the rags were terrible; their feet hung down, their shoulders oscillated, their heads struck against each other, their irons rattled, their eye-balls flashed ferociously, their fists clenched, or opened inertly like the hands of death, and in the rear of the chain a band of children burst into a laugh.

This file of vehicles, whatever their nature might be, was lugubrious. It was plain that within an hour a shower might fall, that it might be followed by another, and then another, that the ragged clothing would be drenched, and that once wet through, these men would not dry again, and once chilled, would never grow warm any more; that their canvas trousers would be glued to their bones by the rain, that water would fill their wooden shoes, that lashes could not prevent the chattering of teeth, that the chain would continue to hold them by the neck, and their feet would continue to hang; and it was impossible not to shudder on seeing these human creatures thus bound and passive beneath the cold autumnal clouds, and surrendered to the rain, the breezes, and all the furies of the atmosphere, like trees and stones. The blows were not even spared the sick who lay bound with ropes and motionless in the seventh vehicle, and who seemed to have been thrown down there like sacks filled with wretchedness.

All at once the sun appeared, and it seemed as if it set fire to all these ferocious heads. Tongues became untied, and a storm of furies, oaths, and songs exploded. The wide horizontal light cut the whole file in two, illumining the heads and bodies, and leaving the feet and wheels in obscurity. Thoughts appeared on faces, and it was a fearful thing to see demons with their masks thrown away, and ferocious souls laid bare. Some of the merrier ones had in their mouths quills, through which they blew vermin on the crowd, selecting women: the dawn caused their lamentable faces to stand out in the darkness of the shadows. Not one of these beings but was misshapen through wretchedness, and it was so monstrous that it seemed to change the light of the sun into the gleam of a lightning

flash. The first cart-load had struck up, and were now loudly singing with a haggard joviality, a pot-pourri of Desaugiers, at that time famous, under the title of *la Vestale*; the trees shook mournfully, while in the side-walks bourgeois faces were listening with an idiotic beatitude to these comic songs chanted by spectres. All destinies could be found in this gang, like a chaos; there were there the facial angles of all animals—old men, youths, naked skulls, grey beards, cynical monstrosities, sulky resignation, savage grins, wild attitudes, youth, girlish heads with cork-screw curls on the temples, infantine, and for that reason horrible faces, and then countenances of skeletons, which only lacked death. On the first dray could be seen a negro, who had been a slave probably, and was enabled to compare the chains. The frightful leveller, shame, had passed over all these foreheads; at this stage of abasement the last transformations were undergone by all in the lowest depths; and ignorance, changed into dulness, was the equal of intellect changed into despair. No choice was possible among these men, who appeared to be the pick of the mud; and it was clear that the arranger of this unclean procession had not attempted to classify them. These beings had been bound and coupled pell-mell, probably in alphabetical disorder, and loaded hap-hazard on the vehicles. Still, horrors, when grouped, always end by disengaging a resultant; every addition of wretched men produces a total; a common soul issued from each chain, and each dray-load had its physiognomy. By the side of the man who sang was one who yelled; a third begged; another could be seen gnashing his teeth; another threatened the passers-by; another blasphemed God, and the last was silent as the tomb. Dante would have fancied that he saw the seven circles of the Inferno in motion. It was the march of condemnations to punishment, performed in a sinister way, not upon the formidable flashing car of the Apocalypse, but, more gloomy still, in the hang-man's cart.

One of the keepers, who had a hook at the end of his stick, from time to time attempted to stir up this heap of human ordure. An old woman in the crowd pointed them to a little boy of five years of age, and said to him, "You scamp, that will teach you!" As the songs and blasphemy grew louder, the man who seemed the captain of the escort cracked his whip, and at this signal a blind, indiscriminate bastinado fell with the sound of hail upon the seven cart-loads. Many yelled and foamed at the lips, which redoubled the joy of the gamins who had come up, like a cloud of flies settling upon wounds. Jean Valjean's eye had become frightful, it was no longer an

eyeball, but that profound glass bulb which takes the place of the eye in some unfortunate men, which seems unconscious of reality, and in which the reflection of horrors and catastrophes flashes. He was not looking at a spectacle, but going through a vision; he had to rise, fly, escape, but could not move his foot. At times things which you see seize you and root you in the ground. He remained petrified and stupid, asking himself through a confused and inexpressible agony what was the meaning of this sepulchral persecution, and whence came this Pandemonium that pursued him. All at once he raised his hand to his forehead, the usual gesture of those to whom memory suddenly returns; he remembered that this was really the itinerary, that this *détour* was usual to avoid any meeting with royalty which was always possible on the Fontainebleau road, and that five-and-thirty years before he had passed through that *barrière*. Cosette was not the less horrified, though in a different way; she did not understand, her breath failed her, and what she saw did not appear to her possible; at length she exclaimed,—

“Father! what is there in those vehicles?”

Jean Valjean answered,—

“Convicts.”

“Where are they going?”

“To the galleys.”

At this moment the *bastinado*, multiplied by a hundred hands, became tremendous; strokes of the flat of the sabre were mingled with it, and it resembled a tornado of whips and sticks,—the galley-slaves bowed their heads, a hideous obedience was produced by the punishment, and all were silent, with the looks of chained wolves. Cosette, trembling in all her limbs, continued,—

“Father, are they still men?”

“Sometimes,” the wretched man replied.

It was, in fact, the Chain, which, leaving Bicêtre before day-break, was taking the Mans road, to avoid Fontainebleau, where the king then was. This *détour* made the fearful journey last three or four days longer; but it surely may be prolonged to save a royal personage the sight of a punishment! Jean Valjean went home crushed, for such encounters are blows, and the recollections they leave behind resemble a concussion. While walking along the Rue de Babylone Jean Valjean did not notice that Cosette asked him other questions about what they had just seen; perhaps he was himself too absorbed in his despondency to notice her remarks and answer them. At

night, however, when Cosette left him to go to bed, he heard her say in a low voice, and as if speaking to herself, "I feel that if I were to meet one of those men in the street, I should die only from being so close to him."

Luckily, the next day after this tragic interlude there were festivals in Paris on account of some official solemnity which I have forgotten, a review at the Champ de Mars, a quintain on the Seine, theatres in the Champs Elysées, fireworks at the Etoile, and illuminations everywhere. Jean Valjean, breaking through his habits, took Cosette to these rejoicings, in order to make her forget the scene of the previous day, and efface, beneath the laughing tumult of all Paris, the abominable thing which had passed before her. The review, which seasoned the fête, rendered uniforms very natural; hence Jean Valjean put on his National Guard coat, with the vague inner feeling of a man who is seeking a refuge. However, the object of this jaunt seemed to be attained, Cosette, who made it a law to please her father, and to whom any festival was a novelty, accepted the distraction with the easy and light good-will of adolescents, and did not make too disdainful a pout at the porringer of joy which is called a public holiday. Hence Jean Valjean might believe that he had succeeded, and that no trace of the hideous vision remained. A few days after, one morning when the sun was shining, and both were on the garden steps—another infraction of the rules which Jean Valjean seemed to have imposed on himself, and that habit of remaining in her chamber which sadness had caused Cosette to assume,—the girl, wearing a combing jacket, was standing in that morning negligé which adorably envelopes maidens, and looks like a cloud over a star, and with her head in the light, her cheeks pink from a good night's rest, and gazed at softly by the old man, she was plucking the petals of a daisy. She did not know the delicious legend of, "I love you, a little, passionately," &c., for who could have taught it to her? She handled the flower instinctively and innocently, without suspecting that plucking a daisy to pieces is questioning a heart. If there were a fourth grace called Melancholy, she had the air of that grace when smiling. Jean Valjean was fascinated by the contemplation of these little fingers on this flower, forgetting everything in the radiance which surrounded the child. A red-breast was twittering in a bush hard by, and while clouds crossed the sky so gaily that you might have said that they had just been set at liberty, Cosette continued to pluck her flower attentively; she seemed to be thinking of something,

but that something must be charming, all at once she turned her head on her shoulder, with the delicate slowness of a swan, and said to Jean Valjean, "Tell me, father, what the galleys are."

CHAPTER LXXXVII.

AN EXTERNAL WOUND AND AN INTERNAL CURE.

THEIR life thus gradually became overcast; only one amusement was left them which had formerly been a happiness, and that was to carry bread to those who were starving, and clothes to those who were cold. In these visits to the poor, in which Cosette frequently accompanied Jean Valjean, they found again some portion of their old expansiveness, and, at times, when the day had been good, when a good deal of distress had been relieved, and many children warmed and reanimated, Cosette displayed a little gaiety at night. It was at this period that they paid the visit to Jondrette's den. The day after that visit Jean Valjean appeared at an early hour in the pavilion, calm as usual, but with a large wound in his left arm, which was very inflamed and venomous, that resembled a burn, and which he accounted for in some way or other. This wound kept him at home for a whole month, for he would not see any medical man, and when Cosette pressed him, he said, "Call in the dog-doctor." Cosette dressed his wound morning and night with an air of such divine and angelic happiness at being useful to him, that Jean Valjean felt all his old joy return, his fears and anxieties dissipated, and he gazed at Cosette, saying, "Oh, the excellent wound! the good evil!"

Cosette, seeing her father ill, had deserted the pavilion, and regained her taste for the little outhouse and the back court. She spent nearly the whole day by the side of Jean Valjean, and read to him any books he chose, which were generally travels. Jean Valjean was regenerated: his happiness returned with ineffable radiance; the Luxembourg, the young unknown prowler, Cosette's coldness, all these soul-clouds disappeared, and he found himself saying, "I once imagined all that; I am an old madman!" His happiness

was such that the frightful discovery of the Thénardiens in the Jondrettes, which was so unexpected, had to some extent glided over him. He had succeeded in escaping, his trail was lost, and what did he care for the rest! he only thought of it to pity those wretches. They were in prison, and henceforth incapable of mischief, he thought, but what a lamentable family in distress! As for the hideous vision of the Barrière du Maine, Cosette had not spoken again about it. In the convent Sister Ste Mechtilde had taught Cosette music; she had a voice such as a linnet would have if it possessed a soul, and at times she sang melancholy songs in the wounded man's obscure room, which Jean Valjean was delighted with. Spring arrived, and the garden was so delicious at that season of the year, that Jean Valjean said to Cosette, "You never go out, and I wish you to take a stroll." "As you please, father," said Cosette. And, to obey her father, she resumed her walks in the garden, generally alone, for, as we have mentioned, Jean Valjean, who was probably afraid of being seen from the gate, hardly ever entered it.

Jean Valjean's wound had been a diversion; when Cosette saw that her father suffered less, and was recovering and seemed happy, she felt a satisfaction which she did not even notice, for it came so softly and naturally. Then, too, it was the month of March, the days were drawing out, winter was departing, and it always takes with it some portion of our sorrow; then came April, that day-break of summer, fresh as every dawn, and gay like all childhoods, and somewhat tearful at times like the new-born babe it is. Nature in that month has charming beams which pass from the sky, the clouds, the trees, the fields, and the flowers, into the human heart. Cosette was still too young for this April joy, which resembled her, not to penetrate her; insensibly, and without suspecting it, the dark cloud departed from her mind. In spring there is light in sad souls, as there is at midday in cellars. Cosette was no longer so very sad; it was so, but she did not attempt to account for it. In the morning, after breakfast, when she succeeded in drawing her father into the garden for a quarter of an hour, and walked him up and down, while supporting his bad arm, she did not notice that she laughed every moment and was happy. Jean Valjean was delighted to see her become ruddy-cheeked and fresh once more.

"Oh! the famous wound!" he repeated to himself, in a low voice.

And he was grateful to the Thénardiens. So soon as his wound was cured he recommenced his solitary night-rambles;

and it would be a mistake to suppose that a man can walk about alone in the uninhabited regions of Paris without meeting with some adventure.

CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

MOTHER PLUTARCH ACCOUNTS FOR A MIRACLE.

ONE evening little Gavroche had eaten nothing; he remembered that he had not dined either on the previous day, and that was becoming ridiculous, so he formed the resolution to try and sup. He went prowling about at the deserted spots beyond the Salpêtrière, for there are good windfalls there; where there is nobody something may be found. He thus reached a suburb which seemed to him to be the village of Austerlitz. In one of his previous strolls he had noticed there an old garden frequented by an old man and an old woman, and in this garden a passable apple-tree. By the side of this tree was a sort of badly-closed fruit-loft, whence an apple might be obtained. An apple is a supper, an apple is life, and what ruined Adam might save Gavroche. The garden skirted a solitary unpaved lane, bordered by shrubs while waiting for houses, and a hedge separated it from the lane. Gavroche proceeded to the garden; he found the lane again, he recognized the apple-tree, and examined the hedge; a hedge is but a stride. Day was declining, there was not a cat in the lane, and the hour was good. Gavroche was preparing to clamber over the hedge when he stopped short—some people were talking in the garden. Gavroche looked through one of the interstices in the hedge. Two paces from him, at the foot of the hedge, lay a stone, which formed a species of bench, and on this bench the old man of the garden was seated with the old woman standing in front of him. The old woman was grumbling, and Gavroche, who was not troubled with too much discretion, listened.

“Monsieur Mabœuf!” the old woman said.

“Mabœuf!” Gavroche thought, “that’s a rum name.”

The old man thus addressed did not stir, and the old woman repeated,—

“Monsieur Mabœuf!”

The old man, without taking his eyes off the ground, resolved to answer,—

"Well, Mother Plutarch!"

"Mother Plutarch!" Gavroche thought, "that's another rum name."

Mother Plutarch continued, and the old gentleman was compelled to accept the conversation.

"The landlord is not satisfied."

"Why so?"

"There are three quarters owing."

"In three months more we shall owe four."

"He says that he will turn you out."

"I will go."

"The greengrocer wants to be paid, or she will supply no more fagots. How shall we warm ourselves this winter if we have no wood?"

"There is the sun."

"The butcher has stopped our credit, and will not supply any more meat."

"That is lucky, for I cannot digest meat; it is heavy."

"But what shall we have for dinner?"

"Bread."

"The baker insists on receiving something on account; no money, no bread, he says."

"Very good."

"What will you eat?"

"We have the apples."

"But, really, sir, we cannot live in that way without money."

"I have none."

The old woman went away, and left the old gentleman alone. He began thinking, and Gavroche thought too: it was almost night. The first result of Gavroche's reflection was that, instead of climbing over the hedge, he lay down under it. The branches parted a little at the bottom. "Hilloh," said Gavroche to himself, "it's an alcove," and he crept into it. His back was almost against the octogenarian's bench, and he could hear him breathe. Then, in lieu of dining, Gavroche tried to sleep, but it was the sleep of a cat, with one eye open; while dozing Gavroche watched. The whiteness of the twilight sky lit up the ground, and the lane formed a livid line between two rows of dark streets. All at once two figures appeared on this white stripe, one was in front and the other a little distance behind.

"Here are two coves," Gavroche growled.

The first figure seemed to be some old bowed citizen, more than simply attired, who walked slowly, owing to his age, and

was strolling about in the starlight. The second was straight, firm, and slim; he regulated his steps by those of the man in front; but suppleness and agility could be detected in his voluntary slowness. This figure had something ferocious and alarming about it, and the appearance of what was called a dandy in those days; the hat was of a good shape, and the coat was black, well cut, probably of fine cloth, and tight at the waist. He held his head up with a sort of robust grace, and under the hat a glimpse could be caught of a pale, youthful profile in the twilight. This profile had a rose in its mouth, and was familiar to Gavroche, for it was Montparnasse; as for the other, there was nothing to be said save that he was a respectable old man. Gavroche at once began observing, for it was evident that one of these men had projects upon the other. Gavroche was well situated to see the finale, and the alcove had opportunely become a hiding-place. Montparnasse, hunting at such an hour and such a spot, that was menacing. Gavroche felt his gamin entrails moved with pity for the old gentleman. What should he do? interfere? one weakness helping another! Montparnasse would have laughed at it, for Gavroche did not conceal from himself that the old man first, and then the boy, would be only two mouthfuls for this formidable bandit of eighteen. While Gavroche was deliberating, the attack, a sudden and hideous attack, took place; it was the attack of a tiger on an onager, of a spider on a fly. Montparnasse threw away the rose, leapt upon the old man, grappled him and clung to him, and Gavroche had difficulty in repressing a cry. A moment after one of these men was beneath the other, crushed, gasping, and struggling with a knee of marble on his chest. But it was not exactly what Gavroche had anticipated; the man on the ground was Montparnasse, the one at the top the citizen. All this took place a few yards from Gavroche. The old man received the shock, and repaid it so terribly that in an instant the assailant and the assailed changed parts.

"That's a tough invalide," Gavroche thought. And he could not refrain from clapping his hands, but it was thrown away; it was not heard by the two combatants, who deafened one another, and mingled their breath in the struggle. At length there was a silence, and Montparnasse ceased writhing; Gavroche muttered this aside, "Is he dead?" The worthy man had not uttered a word or given a cry; he rose, and Gavroche heard him say to Montparnasse, "Get up."

Montparnasse did so, but the citizen still held him. Montparnasse had the humiliated and furious attitude of a wolf snapped at by a sheep. Gavroche looked and listened, making

an effort to double his eyes with his ears ; he was enormously amused. He was rewarded for his conscientious anxiety, for he was able to catch the following dialogue, which borrowed from the darkness a sort of tragic accent ; the gentleman questioned, and Montparnasse answered,—

“ What is your age ? ”

“ Nineteen.”

“ You are strong and healthy, why do you not work ? ”

“ It is a bore.”

“ What is your trade ? ”

“ Idler.”

“ Speak seriously. Can anything be done for you ? what do you wish to be ? ”

“ A robber.”

There was a silence, and the old gentleman seemed in profound thought, but he did not loose his hold of Montparnasse. Every now and then the young bandit, who was vigorous and active, gave starts like a wild beast caught in a snare, he shook himself, attempted a trip, wildly writhed his limbs, and tried to escape. The old gentleman did not appear to notice it, and held the ruffian's two arms in one hand with the sovereign indifference of absolute strength. The old man's reverie lasted some time ; then, gazing fixedly at Montparnasse, he mildly raised his voice and addressed to him, in the darkness where they stood, a sort of solemn appeal, of which Gavroche did not lose a syllable.

“ My boy, you are entering by sloth into the most laborious of existences. Ah ! you declare yourself an idler, then prepare yourself for labour. Have you ever seen a formidable machine which is called a flatting-press ? You must be on your guard against it, for it is a crafty and ferocious thing, and if it catch you by the skirt of the coat it drags you under it entirely. This machine is indolence. Stop while there is yet time, and save yourself, otherwise it is all over with you, and ere long you will be among the cog-wheels. Once caught, hope for nothing more. You will be forced to fatigue yourself, idler, and no rest will be allowed you, for the iron hand of implacable toil has seized you. You refuse to earn your livelihood, have a calling, and accomplish a duty ; it bores you to be like the rest : well, you will be different. Labour is the law, and whoever repulses it as a bore must have it as a punishment. You do not wish to be a labourer, and you will be a slave ; toil only lets you loose on one side to seize you again on the other ; you do not wish to be its friend, and you will be its negro. Ah, I did not care for the honest fatigue of men, and you are

about to know the sweat of the damned; while others sing you will groan. You will see other men working in the distance, and they will seem to you to be resting. The labourer, the reaper, the sailor, the blacksmith, will appear to you in the light, like the blessed inmates of a paradise. What a radiance there is in the anvil! what joy it is to guide the plough, and tie up the sheaf; what a holiday to fly before the wind in a boat! But you, idler, will have to dig and drag, and roll and walk! Pull at your halter, for you are a beast of burden in the service of hell! So your desire is to do nothing? Well, you will not have a week, a day, an hour without feeling crushed. You will not be able to lift anything without agony, and every passing minute will make your muscles crack. What is a feather for others will be a rock for you, and the most simple things will grow scarpred. Life will become a monster around you, and coming, going, breathing, will be so many terrible tasks for you. Your lungs will produce in you the effect of a hundred pound weight, and going there sooner than here will be a problem to solve. Any man who wishes to go out, merely opens his door and finds himself in the street: but if you wish to go out you must pierce through your wall. What do honest men do to reach the street? they go down-stairs; but you will tear up your sheets, make a cord of them fibre by fibre, then pass through your window and hang by this thread over an abyss, and it will take place at night, in the storm, the rain, or the hurricane, and if the cord be too short you will have but one way of descending, by falling—falling hap-hazard into the gulf, and from any height, and on what? on some unknown thing beneath. Or you will climb up a chimney at the risk of burning yourself; or crawl through a sewer at the risk of drowning. I will say nothing of the holes which must be masked; of the stones which you will have to remove and put back twenty times a day, or of the plaster you must hide under your mattress. A lock presents itself, and the citizen has in his pocket the key for it, made by the locksmith, but you, if you wish to go out, are condemned to make a terrible masterpiece; you will take a double sou and cut it asunder with tools of your own invention; that is your business. Then you will hollow out the interior of the two parts, being careful not to injure the outside, and form a thread all round the edge, so that the two parts may fit closely like a box and its cover. When they are screwed together there will be nothing suspicious to the watchers, for you will be watched; it will be a double sou, but for yourself a box. What will you place in this box? a small piece of steel, a watch-spring, in which you have made teeth, and which

will be a saw. With this saw, about the length of a pin, you will be obliged to cut through the bolt of the lock, the padlock of your chain, the bar at your window, and the fetter on your leg. This masterpiece done, this prodigy accomplished, all the miracles of art, skill, cleverness, and patience executed, what will be your reward if you are detected?—a dungeon. Such is the future. What precipices are sloth and pleasure! To do nothing is a melancholy resolution, are you aware of that? To live in indolence on the social substance! to be useless, that is to say, injurious! This leads straight to the bottom of misery. Woe to the man who wishes to be a parasite, for he will be a vermin! Ah! it does not please you to work! Ah! you have only one thought, to drink well, eat well, and sleep well. You will drink water; you will eat black bread; you will sleep on a plank, with fetters riveted to your limbs, and feel their coldness at night in your flesh! You will break these fetters and fly; very good. You will drag yourself on your stomach into the shrubs and eat grass like the beasts of the field, and you will be recaptured, and then you will pass years in a dungeon, chained to the wall, groping in the dark for your water-jug, biting at frightful black bread which dogs would refuse, and eating beans which maggots have eaten before you. You will be a woodlouse in a cellar. Ah, ah! take pity on yourself, wretched boy, still so young, who were at your nurse's breast not twenty years ago, and have doubtless a mother still! I implore you to listen to me. You want fine black cloth, polished shoes, to scent your head with fragrant oil, to please creatures, and be a pretty fellow; you will have your hair close shaven, and wear a red jacket and wooden shoes. You want a ring on your finger, and will wear a collar on your neck, and if you look at a woman you will be beaten. And you will go in there at twenty and come out at fifty years of age. You will go in young, red-cheeked, healthy, with your sparkling eyes, and all your white teeth, and your curly locks, and you will come out again broken, bent, wrinkled, toothless, horrible, and grey-headed! Ah, my poor boy, you are on the wrong road, and indolence is a bad adviser, for robbery is the hardest of labours. Take my advice, and do not undertake the laborious task of being an idler. To become a rogue is inconvenient, and it is not nearly so hard to be an honest man. Now go and think over what I have said to you. By the by, what did you want of me? my purse? here it is."

And the old man, releasing Montparnasse, placed his purse in his hand, which Montparnasse weighed for a moment; after which, with the same mechanical precaution as if he had stolen

it, Montparnasse let it glide gently into the back-pocket of his coat. All this said and done, the old gentleman turned his back and quietly resumed his walk.

"Old humbug!" Montparnasse muttered. Who was the old gentleman? the reader has doubtless guessed. Montparnasse, in his stupefaction, watched him till he disappeared in the gloom, and this contemplation was fatal for him. While the old gentleman retired Gavroche advanced. He had assured himself by a glance that Father Mabœuf was still seated on his bench, and was probably asleep; then the gamin left the bushes, and began crawling in the shadow behind the motionless Montparnasse. He thus got up to the young bandit unnoticed, gently insinuated his hand into the back-pocket of the fine black cloth coat, seized the purse, withdrew his hand, and crawled back again into the shadow like a lizard. Montparnasse, who had no reason to be on his guard, and who was thinking, for the first time in his life, perceived nothing, and Gavroche, when he had returned to the spot where Father Mabœuf was sitting, threw the purse over the hedge and ran off at full speed. The purse fell on Father Mabœuf's foot and awoke him. He stooped down and picked up the purse, which he opened, without comprehending anything. It was a purse with two compartments; in one was some change, in the other were six Napoleons. M. Mabœuf, greatly startled, carried the thing to his housekeeper.

"It has fallen from heaven," said Mother Plutarch.

CHAPTER LXXXIX.

COSETTE'S FEARS.

COSETTE's sorrow, so poignant and so sharp four or five months previously, had, without her knowledge, attained the convalescent stage. Nature, spring, youth, love for her father, the gaiety of the flowers and birds, filtered gradually day by day, and drop by drop, something that almost resembled oblivion into her virginal and young soul. Was the fire entirely extinguished? or were layers of ashes merely formed? The fact is, that she hardly felt at all the painful and burning point, and on the day when she suddenly thought of Marius; "Why," she said, "I had almost forgotten him." This same week she noticed, while passing the garden gate, a very handsome

officer in the lancers, with a wasp-like waist, a delightful uniform, the cheeks of a girl, a sabre under his arm, waxed moustaches, and lacquered schapska. In other respects, he had light hair, blue eyes flush with his head, a round, vain, insolent, and pretty face; he was exactly the contrary of Marius. He had a cigar in his mouth, and Cosette supposed that he belonged to the regiment quartered in the barracks of the Rue de Babylone. The next day she saw him pass again, and remarked the hour. From this moment—was it an accident?—she saw him pass nearly every day. The officer's comrades perceived that there was in this badly-kept garden, and behind this poor, old-fashioned railing, a very pretty creature, who was nearly always there when the handsome lieutenant passed, who is no stranger to the reader, as his name was Theodule Gillenormand.

"Hilloh!" they said to him, "there's a little girl making eyes at you, just look at her."

"Have I the time," the lancer replied, "to look at all the gurls who look at me?"

It was at this identical time that Marius was slowly descending to the abyss, and said, "If I could only see her again before I die!" If his wish had been realized, if he had at that moment seen Cosette looking at a lancer, he would have been unable to utter a word, but expired of grief. Whose fault would it have been? nobody's. Marius possessed one of those temperaments which bury themselves in chagrin and abide in it: Cosette was one of those who plunge into it and again emerge. Cosette, however, was passing through that dangerous moment, the fatal phase of feminine reverie left to itself, in which the heart of an isolated maiden resembles those vine tendrils which cling, according to chance, to the capital of a marble column or to the sign-post of an inn. It is a rapid and decisive moment, critical for every orphan, whether she be poor or rich, for wealth does not prevent a bad choice, and misalliances take place in very high society. But the true misalliance is that of souls; and in the same way as many an unknown young man, without name, birth, or fortune, is a marble capital supporting a temple of grand sentiments and grand ideas, so a man of the world, satisfied and opulent, who has polished boots and varnished words, if we look not at the exterior but at the interior, that is to say, what is reserved for the wife, is nought but a stupid log obscurely haunted by violent, unclean, and drunken passions—the inn sign-post.

What was there in Cosette's soul? passion calmed or lulled to sleep, love in a floating state: something which was limpid

and brilliant, perturbed at a certain depth, and sombre lower still. The image of the handsome officer was reflected on the surface, but was there any reminiscence at the bottom, quite at the bottom? perhaps so, but Cosette did not know.

A singular incident occurred.

In the first fortnight of April Jean Valjean went on a journey: this, as we know, occurred from time to time at very lengthened intervals, and he remained away one or two days at the most. Where did he go? no one knew, not even Cosette: once only she had accompanied him in a hackney coach, upon the occasion of one of these absences, to the corner of a little lane, which was called, "L'Impasse de la blanchette." He got out there, and the coach carried Cosette back to the Rue de Babylone. It was generally when money ran short in the house that Jean Valjean took these trips. Jean Valjean, then, was absent, and he had said, "I shall be back in three days." At night Cosette was alone in the drawing-room, and in order to wile away the time, she opened her piano and began singing to her own accompaniment the song of Euryanthe, "Hunters wandering in the wood," which is probably the finest thing we possess in the shape of music. When she had finished she remained passive, till she suddenly fancied she heard some one walking in the garden. It could not be her father, for he was away, and it could not be Toussaint, as she was in bed, for it was ten o'clock at night. Cosette was near the drawing-room shutters, which were closed, and put her ear to them; and it seemed to her that it was the foot-fall of a man who was walking very gently. She hurried up to her room on the first-floor, opened a Venetian frame in her shutter, and looked out into the garden. The moon was shining bright as day, and there was nobody in it. She opened her window: the garden was perfectly calm, and all that could be seen of the street was as deserted as usual.

Cosette thought that she was mistaken, and she had supposed that she heard the noise; it was an hallucination produced by Weber's gloomy and prodigious chorus, which opens before the mind prodigious depths, which trembles before the eye like a dizzy forest, in which we hear the cracking of the dead branches under the restless feet of the hunters, of whom we catch a glimpse in the obscurity. She thought no more of it. Moreover, Cosette was not naturally very timid: she had in her veins some of the blood of the gipsy, and the adventurer who goes about bare-footed. As we may remember, she was rather a lark than a dove, and she had a stern and brave temper.

The next evening, at nightfall, she was walking about the

garden. In the midst of the confused thoughts which occupied her mind, she fancied she could distinguish now and then a noise like that of the previous night, as if some one were walking in the gloom under the trees not far from her, but she said to herself that nothing so resembles the sound of a footfall on grass as the grating of two branches together, and she took no heed of it—besides, she saw nothing. She left the "thicket," and had a small grass-plot to cross ere she reached the house. The moon, which had just risen behind her, projected Cosette's shadow, as she left the clump of bushes, upon the grass in front of her, and she stopped in terror. By the side of her shadow the moon distinctly traced on the grass another singularly startling and terrible shadow—a shadow with a hat on its head. It was like the shadow of a man standing at the edge of the clump a few paces behind Cosette. For a moment she was unable to speak or cry, or call out, or stir, or turn her head, but at last she collected all her courage and boldly turned round. There was nobody; she looked on the ground and the shadow had disappeared. She went back into the shrubs, bravely searched in every corner, went as far as the railings, and discovered nothing. She felt really chilled: was it again an hallucination? what! two days in succession? one hallucination might pass, but two! The alarming point was, that the shadow was most certainly not a ghost, for ghosts never wear round hats.

The next day Jean Valjean returned, and Cosette told him what she fancied she had seen and heard. She expected to be reassured, and that her father would shrug his shoulders and say,—“You are a little goose,” but Jean Valjean became anxious.

“Perhaps it is nothing,” he said to her. He left her with some excuse, and went into the garden, where she saw him examine the railings with considerable attention. In the night she woke up: this time she was certain, and she distinctly heard some one walking just under her windows. She walked to her shutter and opened it. There was in the garden really a man holding a large stick in his hand. At the moment when she was going to cry out the moon lit up the man's face—it was her father. She went to bed again, saying,—“He seems really very anxious!” Jean Valjean passed that and the two following nights in the garden, and Cosette saw him through the hole in her shutter. On the third night the moon was beginning to rise later, and it might be about one in the morning when she heard a hearty burst of laughter, and her father's voice calling her,—

“Cosette!”

She leapt out of bed, put on her dressing-gown, and opened

her window; her father was standing on the grass-plot below.

"I have woke you up to reassure you," he said; "look at this,—here's your shadow in the round hat."

And he showed her on the grass a shadow, which the moon designed, and which really looked rather like the spectre of a man wearing a round hat. It was an outline produced by a zinc chimney-pot with a cowl, which rose above an adjoining roof. Cosette also began laughing, all her mournful suppositions fell away, and the next morning at breakfast she jested at the ill-omened garden, haunted by the ghost of chimney-pots. Jean Valjean quite regained his ease; as for Cosette, she did not notice particularly whether the chimney-pot were really in the direction of the shadow which she had seen or fancied she saw, and whether the moon were in the same part of the heavens. She did not cross-question herself as to the singularity of a chimney-pot which is afraid of being caught in the act, and retires when its shadow is looked at, for the shadow did retire when Cosette turned round, and she fancied herself quite certain of that fact. Cosette became quite reassured, for the demonstration seemed to her perfect, and the thought left her brain that there could have been any one walking about the garden by night. A few days after, however, a fresh incident occurred.

CHAPTER XC.

A HEART BENEATH A STONE.

In the garden, near the railings looking out on the street, there was a stone bench, protected from the gaze of passers-by by a hedge, but it would have been an easy task to reach it by thrusting an arm through the railings and the hedge. One evening in this same month of April Jean Valjean had gone out, and Cosette, after sunset, was seated on this bench. The wind was freshening in the trees, and Cosette was reflecting; an objectless sorrow was gradually gaining on her, the invincible sorrow which night produces, and which comes perhaps—for who knows?—from the mystery of the tomb which is yawning at the moment. Possibly Fantine was in that shadow.

Cosette rose, and slowly went round the garden, walking on the dew-laden grass, and saying to herself through the sort of melancholy somnambulism in which she was plunged, "I ought

to have wooden shoes to walk in the garden at this hour; I shall catch cold." She returned to the bench, but at the moment when she was going to sit down she noticed at the place she had left a rather large stone, which had evidently not been there a moment before. Cosette looked at the stone, asking herself what it meant; all at once the idea that the stone had not reached the bench of itself, that some one had placed it there, and that an arm had been passed through the grating, occurred to her and frightened her. This time it was a real fear, for there was the stone. No doubt was possible; she did not touch it, but fled without daring to look behind her, sought refuge in the house, and at once shuttered, barred, and bolted the French window opening on the steps. Then she asked Toussaint,—

"Has my father come in?"

"No, Miss."

(We have indicated once for all Toussaint's stammering, and we ask leave no longer to accentuate it, as we feel a musical notation of an infirmity to be repulsive.)

Jean Valjean, a thoughtful man, and stroller by night, often did not return till a late hour.

"Toussaint," Cosette continued, "be careful to put up the bars to the shutters looking on the garden, and to place the little iron things in the rings that close them."

"Oh, I am sure I will, Miss."

Toussaint did not fail, and Cosette was well aware of the fact, but she could not refrain from adding,—

"For it is so desolate here."

"Well, that's true," said Toussaint; "we might be murdered before we had the time to say, *Out!* and then, too, master does not sleep in the house. But don't be frightened, Miss. I fasten up the windows like Bastilles. Lone women! I should think that is enough to make a body shudder. Only think! to see men coming into your bed-room and hear them say, '*Hold your tongue!*' and then they begin to cut your throat. It is not so much the dying, for everybody dies, and we know that we must do so, but it is the abomination of feeling those fellows touch you; and then their knives are not sharp, perhaps; oh, Lord!"

"Hold your tongue," said Cosette, "and fasten up everything securely."

Cosette, terrified by the drama improvised by Toussaint, and perhaps too by the apparitions of the last week, which returned to her mind, did not even dare to say to her, "Just go and look at the stone laid on the bench," for fear of having to open

the garden gate again, and the men might walk in. She had all the doors and windows carefully closed, made Toussaint examine the whole house from cellar to attic, locked herself in her bed-room, looked under the bed, and slept badly. The whole night through she saw the stone as large as a mountain and full of caverns. At sunrise—the peculiarity of sunrise is to make us laugh at all our terrors of the night, and our laughter is always proportioned to the fear we have felt—at sunrise, Cosette, on waking, saw her terror like a nightmare, and said to herself, “What could I be thinking about! it was like the steps which I fancied I heard last week in the garden at night! It is like the shadow of the chimney-pot, am I going to turn coward now?” The sun which poured through the crevices of her shutters and made the damask curtains one mass of purple, reassured her so fully that all faded away in her mind, even to the stone.

“There was no more a stone on the bench than there was a man in a round hat in the garden. I dreamt of the stone like the rest.”

She dressed herself, went down into the garden, and felt a cold perspiration all over her—the stone was there. But this only lasted for a moment, for what is terror by night is curiosity by day.

“Nonsense!” she said, “I’ll see.”

She raised the stone, which was of some size, and there was something under it that resembled a letter; it was an envelope of white paper. Cosette seized it; there was no address on it, and it was not sealed up. Still, the envelope, though open, was not empty, for papers could be seen inside. Cosette no longer suffered from terror, nor was it curiosity; it was a commencement of anxiety. Cosette took out a small quire of paper, each page of which was numbered, and bore several lines written in a very nice and delicate hand, so Cosette thought. She looked for a name, but there was none; for a signature, but there was none either. For whom was the packet intended? probably for herself, as a hand had laid it on the bench. From whom did it come? An irresistible fascination seized upon her; she tried to turn her eyes away from these pages, which trembled in her hand. She looked at the sky, the street, the acacias all bathed in light, the pigeons circling round an adjoining roof, and then her eye settled on the manuscript, and she said to herself that she must know what was inside it. This is what she read,—

The reduction of the Universe to a single being, the dilatation of a single being as far as God, such is love.

will be a saw. With this saw, about the length of a pin, you will be obliged to cut through the bolt of the lock, the padlock of your chain, the bar at your window, and the fetter on your leg. This masterpiece done, this prodigy accomplished, all the miracles of art, skill, cleverness, and patience executed, what will be your reward if you are detected?—a dungeon. Such is the future. What precipices are sloth and pleasure! To do nothing is a melancholy resolution, are you aware of that? To live in indolence on the social substance! to be useless, that is to say, injurious! This leads straight to the bottom of misery. Woe to the man who wishes to be a parasite, for he will be a vermin! Ah! it does not please you to work! Ah! you have only one thought, to drink well, eat well, and sleep well. You will drink water; you will eat black bread; you will sleep on a plank, with fetters riveted to your limbs, and feel their coldness at night in your flesh! You will break these fetters and fly; very good. You will drag yourself on your stomach into the shrubs and eat grass like the beasts of the field, and you will be recaptured, and then you will pass years in a dungeon, chained to the wall, groping in the dark for your water-jug, biting at frightful black bread which dogs would refuse, and eating beans which maggots have eaten before you. You will be a woodlouse in a cellar. Ah, ah! take pity on yourself, wretched boy, still so young, who were at your nurse's breast not twenty years ago, and have doubtless a mother still! I implore you to listen to me. You want fine black cloth, polished shoes, to scent your head with fragrant oil, to please creatures, and be a pretty fellow; you will have your hair close shaven, and wear a red jacket and wooden shoes. You want a ring on your finger, and will wear a collar on your neck, and if you look at a woman you will be beaten. And you will go in there at twenty and come out at fifty years of age. You will go in young, red-cheeked, healthy, with your sparkling eyes, and all your white teeth, and your curly locks, and you will come out again broken, bent, wrinkled, toothless, horrible, and grey-headed! Ah, my poor boy, you are on the wrong road, and indolence is a bad adviser, for robbery is the hardest of labours. Take my advice, and do not undertake the laborious task of being an idler. To become a rogue is inconvenient, and it is not nearly so hard to be an honest man. Now go and think over what I have said to you. By the by, what did you want of me? my purse? here it is."

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it, Montparnasse let it glide gently into the back-pocket of his coat. All this said and done, the old gentleman turned his back and quietly resumed his walk.

"Old humbug!" Montparnasse muttered. Who was the old gentleman? the reader has doubtless guessed. Montparnasse, in his stupefaction, watched him till he disappeared in the gloom, and this contemplation was fatal for him. While the old gentleman retired Gavroche advanced. He had assured himself by a glance that Father Mabœuf was still seated on his bench, and was probably asleep; then the gamin left the bushes, and began crawling in the shadow behind the motionless Montparnasse. He thus got up to the young bandit unnoticed, gently insinuated his hand into the back-pocket of the fine black cloth coat, seized the purse, withdrew his hand, and crawled back again into the shadow like a lizard. Montparnasse, who had no reason to be on his guard, and who was thinking for the first time in his life, perceived nothing, and Gavroche, when he had returned to the spot where Father Mabœuf was sitting, threw the purse over the hedge and ran off at full speed. The purse fell on Father Mabœuf's foot and awoke him. He stooped down and picked up the purse, which he opened, without comprehending anything. It was a purse with two compartments; in one was some change, in the other were six Napoleons. M. Mabœuf, greatly startled, carried the thing to his housekeeper.

"It has fallen from heaven," said Mother Plutarch.

CHAPTER LXXXIX.

COSETTE'S FEARS.

COSETTE's sorrow, so poignant and so sharp four or five months previously, had, without her knowledge, attained the convalescent stage. Nature, spring, youth, love for her father, the gaiety of the flowers and birds, filtered gradually day by day, and drop by drop, something that almost resembled oblivion into her virginal and young soul. Was the fire entirely extinguished? or were layers of ashes merely formed? The fact is, that she hardly felt at all the painful and burning point, and on the day when she suddenly thought of Marius; "Why," she said, "I had almost forgotten him." This same week she noticed, while passing the garden gate, a very handsome

you wish for paradise. You have paradise, and you crave for heaven. Oh ye who love each other, have all that is contained in love, hence try to find it in it. Love has, equally with heaven, contemplation, and more than heaven, voluptuousness.

Does she still go to the Luxembourg? No, sir.—Does she attend Mass in that church? She does not go there any longer.—Does she still live in this house? She has removed.—Where has she gone to live? She did not leave her address.

What a gloomy thing it is not to know where to find one's soul!

Love has its childishness, and other passions have their littleness. Shame on the passions that make a man little! Honour to the one which makes him a child!

It is a strange thing, are you aware of it? I am in the night, for a woman carried off heaven with her when she flew away.

Oh! to lie side by side in the same tomb hand in hand, and to gently caress a finger from time to time in the darkness, would suffice for my eternity.

You who suffer because you love, love more than ever. To die of love is to live through it.

Love, a gloomy, starry transfiguration, is mingled with this punishment, and there is ecstasy in the agony.

Oh, joy of birds! they sing because they have the nest.

Love is the celestial breathing of the atmosphere of paradise.

Profound hearts, wise minds, take life as God makes it; it is a long trial, an unintelligible preparation for the unknown destiny. This destiny, the true one, begins for man with the first step in the interior of the tomb. Then something appears to him, and he begins to distinguish the definite. The definite, reflect on that word. The living see the infinite, but the definite only shows itself to the dead. In the mean while, love and suffer, hope and contemplate. Woe, alas! to the man who has only loved bodies, shapes, and appearances! Death will

strip him of all that. Try to love souls, and you will meet them again.

I have met in the street a very poor young man who was in love. His hat was old, his coat worn, his coat was out at elbows, the water passed through his shoes, and the stars through his soul.

What a grand thing it is to be loved ! what a grander thing still to love ! The heart becomes heroic by the might of passion. Henceforth it is composed of nought but what is pure, and is only supported by what is elevated and great. An unworthy thought can no more germinate in it than a nettle on a glacier. The lofty and serene soul, inaccessible to emotions and vulgar passions, soaring above the clouds and shadows of the world, follies, falsehoods, hatreds, vanities, and miseries, dwells in the azure of the sky, and henceforth only feels the profound and subterranean heavings of destiny as the summit of the mountains feels earthquakes.

If there were nobody who loved, the sun would be extinguished.

CHAPTER XCI.

COSETTE AFTER THE LETTER.


WHILE reading these lines Cosette gradually fell into a reverie, and at the moment when she raised her eyes from the last page the pretty officer passed triumphantly in front of the gate, for it was his hour. Cosette found him hideous. She began gazing at the roll of paper again ; it was in an exquisite hand-writing, Cosette thought, all written by the same hand, but with different inks, some very black, others pale, as when ink is put in the stand, and consequently on different days. It was, therefore, a thought expanded on the paper, sigh by sigh, irregularly, without order, without choice, without purpose, accidentally. Cosette had never read anything like it ; this manuscript, in which she saw more light than obscurity, produced on her the effect of the door of a shrine left ajar. Each of these mysterious lines flashed in her eyes, and inundated

her heart with a strange light. The education which she had received had always spoken to her of the soul, and not of love, much as if a person were to speak of the burning log and say nothing about the flame. This manuscript of fifteen pages suddenly and gently revealed to her the whole of love, sorrow, destiny, life, eternity, the beginning and the end. It was like a hand which opened and threw upon her a galaxy of beams. She felt in these few lines an impassioned, ardent, generous, and honest nature, a sacred will, an immense grief, and an immense hope, a contracted heart, and an expanded ecstasy. What was the manuscript? a letter. A letter without address, name, or signature, pressing, and disinterested, an enigma composed of truths, a love-message fit to be borne by an angel and read by a virgin; a rendezvous appointed off the world, a sweet love-letter written by a phantom to a shadow. It was a tranquil and crushed absent man, who seemed ready to seek a refuge in death, and who sent to his absent love the secret of destiny, the key of life. It had been written with one foot in the grave and the hand in heaven, and these lines, which had fallen one by one on the paper, were what might be called drops of the soul.

And now, from whom could these pages come? Who could have written them? Cosette did not hesitate for a moment,—only from one man, from *him*! Daylight had returned to her mind and everything reappeared. She experienced an extraordinary joy and a profound agony. It was he! he who wrote to her! he had been there! his arm had been passed through the railings! while she was forgetting him he had found her again! But had she forgotten him? no, never! she was mad to have thought so for a moment, for she had ever loved, ever adored him. The fire was covered, and had smouldered for a while, but, as she now plainly saw, it had spread its ravages, and again burst into a flame which entirely kindled her. This letter was like a spark that had fallen from the other soul into hers; she felt the fire begin again, and she was penetrated by every word of the manuscript. "Oh yes," she said to herself, "how well I recognize all this! I had read it all already in his eyes."

As she finished reading it for the third time Lieutenant Theodule returned past the railings, and clanked his spurs on the pavement. Cosette was obliged to raise her eyes, and she found him insipid, silly, stupid, useless, fatuous, displeasing, impertinent, and very ugly. The officer thought himself bound to smile, and she turned away ashamed and indignant; she would have gladly thrown something at his head. She ran

away, re-entered the house, and locked herself in her bed-room, to re-read the letter, learn it by heart, and dream. When she had read it thoroughly she kissed it and hid it in her bosom. It was all over. Cosette had fallen back into the profound seraphic love, the Paradisaic abyss had opened again. The whole day through Cosette was in a state of bewilderment; she hardly thought, and her ideas were confused in her brain; she could not succeed in forming any conjectures, and she hoped through a tremor, what? vague things. She did not dare promise herself anything, and she would not refuse herself anything. A pallor passed over her face, and a quiver over her limbs, and she fancied at moments that it was all a chimera, and said to herself, "Is it real?" then she felt the well-beloved paper under her dress, pressed it to her heart, felt the corners against her flesh, and if Jean Valjean had seen her at that moment he would have shuddered at the luminous and strange joy which overflowed from her eyelids. "Oh yes," she thought, "it is certainly his! this comes from him for me!" And she said to herself that an intervention of the angels, a celestial accident, had restored him to her. Oh transfiguration of love! oh dreams! this celestial accident, this intervention of angels, was the ball of bread cast by one robber to another from the Charlemagne yard to the lions' den, over the buildings of la Force.

When night came Jean Valjean went out, and Cosette dressed herself. She arranged her hair in the way that best became her, and put on a dress whose body, being cut a little too low, displayed the whole of the neck, and was therefore, as girls say, "rather indecent." It was not the least in the world indecent, but it was prettier than the former fashion. She dressed herself in this way without knowing why. Was she going out? No. Did she expect a visitor? No. She went down into the garden as it grew dark; Toussaint was engaged in her kitchen, which looked out on the back-yard. Cosette began walking under the branches, removing them from time to time with her hand, as some were very low, and thus reached the bench. The stone was still there, and she sat down and laid her beautiful white hand on the stone, as if to caress and thank it. All at once she had that indescribable feeling which people experience even without seeing, when some one is standing behind them. She turned her head and rose—it was he. He was bare-headed, and seemed pale and thin, and his black clothes could be scarce distinguished. The twilight rendered his glorious forehead livid, and covered his eyes with darkness, and he had, beneath a veil of incomparable gentleness, something belonging to death and night. His face was lit 

by the flush of departing day, and by the thoughts of an expiring soul. He seemed as if he were not yet a spectre, but was no longer a man. His hat was thrown among the shrubs a few paces from him. Cosette, though ready to faint, did not utter a cry; she slowly recoiled, as she felt herself attracted, but he did not stir. Through the ineffable sadness that enveloped him she felt the glance of the eyes which she could not see. Cosette, in recoiling, came to a tree, and leaned against it; had it not been for this tree she would have fallen. Then she heard his voice, that voice which she had really never heard before, scarce louder than the rustling of the foliage, as he murmured,—

"Pardon me for being here; my heart is swollen, I could not live as I was, and I have come. Have you read what I placed on that bench? do you recognize me at all? do not be frightened at me. Do you remember that day when you looked at me, now so long ago? It was in the Luxembourg garden, near the Gladiator, and the days on which you passed before me were June 16 and July 2, it is nearly a year ago. I have not seen you again for a very long time. I inquired of the woman who lets out chairs, and she said that you no longer came there. You lived in the Rue de l'Ouest on the third floor front of a new house. You see that I know. I followed you, what else could I do? and then you disappeared. I fancied that I saw you pass once as I was reading the papers under the Odéon Arcade, and ran after you, but no, it was a person wearing a bonnet like yours. At night I come here—fear nothing, no one sees me—and I walk very softly that you may not hear me, for you might be alarmed. The other evening I was behind you, you turned round, and I fled. Once I heard you sing, and I was happy; does it harm you that I should listen to you through the shutters while singing? no, it cannot harm you. You see you are my angel, so let me come now and then, and I believe that I am going to die. If you only knew how I adore you! But forgive me, I am speaking to you, I know not what I am saying, perhaps I offend you—do I offend you?"

"Oh, my mother!" she said.

And she sank down as if she were dying. He seized her in his arms, and pressed her to his heart, not knowing what he did. He supported her while himself tottering. He felt as if his head were full of smoke; flashes passed between his eyelashes; his ideas left him, and it seemed to him as if he were accomplishing a religious act, and yet committing a profanation. However, he had not the least desire for this ravishing creature, whose form he felt against his chest; he was distractedly in

love. She took his hand, and laid it on her heart; he felt the paper there, and stammered,—

“You love me then?”

She answered in so low a voice, that it was almost an inaudible breath,—

“Silence! you know I do.”

And she hid her blushing face in the chest of the proud and intoxicated young man. He fell on to the bench, and she by his side. They no longer found words, and the stars were beginning to twinkle. How came it that their lips met? how comes it that the bird sings, the snow melts, the rose opens, May bursts into life, and the dawn grows white behind the black trees on the rustling tops of the hills? One kiss, and that was all; both trembled and gazed at each other in the darkness with flashing eyes. They neither felt the fresh night nor the cold stone, nor the damp grass, nor the moist soil,—they looked at each other, and their hearts were full of thoughts. Their hands were clasped without their cognizance. She did not ask him, did not even think of it, how he had managed to enter the garden, for it seemed to her so simple that he should be there. From time to time Marius’ knee touched Cosette’s knee, and both quivered. At intervals Cosette stammered a word; her soul trembled on her lips like the dew-drop on a flower.

Gradually they conversed, and expansiveness succeeded the silence which is plenitude. The night was serene and splendid above their heads, and these two beings, pure as spirits, told each other everything,—their dreams, their intoxication, their ecstasy, their chimeras, their depressions, how they had adored and longed for each other at a distance, and their mutual despair when they ceased to meet. They confided to each other in an ideal intimacy which nothing henceforth could increase, all their most hidden and mysterious thoughts. They told each other, with a candid faith in their illusions, all that love, youth, and the remnant of childhood which they still had, brought to their minds; their two hearts were poured into each other, so that at the end of an hour the young man had the maiden’s soul and the maiden his. They were mutually penetrated, enchanted, and dazzled. When they had finished, when they had told each other everything, she laid her head on his shoulder and asked him,—

“What is your name?”

“Marius,” he said; “and yours?”

“Mine is Cosette.”

CHAPTER XCII.

A MALICIOUS TRICK OF THE WIND.

SINCE 1823, while the public-house at Montfermeil was sinking, and gradually being swallowed up, not in the abyss of a bankruptcy, but in the sewer of small debts, the Thénardiens had had two more children, both male. These made five, two daughters and three boys, and they were a good many. The mother had got rid of the latter while still babies by a singular piece of good luck. Got rid of, that is exactly the term, for in this woman there was only a fragment of nature; it is a phenomenon, however, of which there is more than one instance. Like the Marechale de Lamothe-Houdancourt, the Thénardier was only a mother as far as her daughters, and her maternity ended there. Her hatred of the human race began with her sons: on that side her cruelty was precipitous, and her heart had a lugubrious escarpment there. As we have seen, she detested the eldest, and execrated the two others. Why? because she did. The most terrible of motives and most indisputable of answers is, Because. "I do not want a pack of squalling brats," this mother said.

Let us now explain how the Thénardiens managed to dispose of their two last children, and even make a profit of them. That Magnon, to whom we referred a few pages back, was the same who continued to get an annuity out of old Gillenormand for the two children she had. She lived on the Quai des Celestins, at the corner of that ancient Rue du Petit-Musc, which has done all it could to change its bad reputation into a good odour. Our readers will remember the great croup-epidemic, which, thirty-five years ago, desolated the banks of the Seine in Paris, and of which science took advantage to make experiments on a grand scale as to the efficacy of inhaling alum, for which the external application of tincture of iodine has been so usefully substituted in our day. In this epidemic Magnon lost her two boys, still very young, on the same day, one in the morning the other in the evening. It was a blow, for these children were precious to their mother, as they represented eighty francs a month. These eighty francs were very punctually paid by the receiver of M. Gillenormand's rents, a M. Barge, a retired bailiff, who lived in the Rue de Sicile. When the children were dead the annuity was buried, and so

Magnon sought an expedient. In the dark freemasonry of evil of which she formed part everything is known, secrets are kept, and people help each other. Magnon wanted two children, and Madame Thénardier had two of the same size and age; it was a good arrangement for one, and an excellent investment for the other. The little Thénardiens became the little Magnons, and Magnon left the Quai des Celestins, and went to live in the Rue Cloche Percée. In Paris the identity which attaches an individual to himself is broken by moving from one street to the others. The authorities, not being warned by anything, made no objections, and the substitution was effected in the simplest way in the world. Thénardier, however, demanded for this loan of children ten francs a month, which Magnon promised, and even paid. We need not say that M. Gillenormand continued to execute himself, and went every six months to see the children. He did not notice the change. "Oh, sir," Magnon would say to him, "how like you they are to be sure."

Thénardier, to whom avatars were an easy task, seized this opportunity to become Jondrette. His two daughters and Gavroche had scarcely had time to perceive that they had two little brothers, for in a certain stage of misery people are affected by a sort of spectral indifference, and regard human beings as ghosts. Your nearest relatives are often to you no more than vague forms of the shadow, hardly to be distinguished from the nebulous back-ground of life, and which easily become blended again with the invisible. On the evening of the day when mother Thénardier handed over her two babes to Magnon, with the well-expressed will of renouncing them for ever, she felt, or pretended to feel, a scruple, and said to her husband, "Why, that is deserting one's children!" but Thénardier, magisterial and phlegmatic, cauterized the scruple with this remark, "Jean Jacques Rousseau did better." From scruple the mother passed to anxiety. "But suppose the police were to trouble us? tell me, Monsieur Thénardier, whether what we have done is permitted?" Thénardier replied, "Everything is permitted. Besides, no one has any interest in inquiring closely after children that have not a halfpenny." Magnon was a sort of she-dandy in crime, and dressed handsomely. She shared her rooms, which were furnished in a conventional and miserable way, with a very clever Gallicized English thief. This English woman, a naturalized Parisian, who was closely connected with medals of the library and the diamonds of Mademoiselle Mars, was at a later date celebrated in the annals of crime; she was called *Mamselle Miss*. The two little ones

who had fallen into Magnon's clutches had no cause to complain; recommended by the eighty francs, they were taken care of, like everything which brings in a profit; they were not badly clothed, not badly fed, treated almost like "little gentlemen," and better off with their false mother than the true one. Magnon acted the lady, and never talked slang in their presence. They spent several years there, and Thénardier augured well of it. One day he happened to say to Magnon as she handed him the monthly ten francs, "The 'father' must give them an education."

All at once these two poor little creatures, hitherto tolerably well protected, even by their evil destiny, were suddenly hurled into life, and forced to begin it. An arrest of criminals *en masse*, like that in the Jondrette garret, being necessarily complicated with researches and ulterior incarcerations, is a veritable disaster for that hideous and occult counter-society which lives beneath public society, and an adventure of this nature produces all sorts of convulsions in the gloomy world. The catastrophe of the Thénardiens was the catastrophe of Magnon. One day, a little while after Magnon had given Eponine the note relating to the Rue Plumet, the police made a sudden descent on the Rue Cloche-Percée. Magnon was arrested, as was Mamselle Miss, and all the inhabitants of the house which were suspected were caught in the haul. The two little boys were playing at the time in the back-yard, and saw nothing of the razzia, but when they tried to go in they found the door locked and the house empty. A cobbler whose stall was opposite called to them and gave them a paper which "their mother" had left for them. On the paper was this address, "M. Barge, receiver of rents, No. 8, Rue du Roi de Sicile." The cobbler said to them,— "You no longer live here. Go there, it is close by, the first street on your left. Ask your way with that paper." The boys set off, the elder leading the younger, and holding in his hand the paper which was to serve as their guide. It was cold, and his little numbed fingers held the paper badly, and at the corner of a lane a puff of wind tore it from him, and as it was night the boy could not find it again. They began wandering about the streets hap-hazard.

CHAPTER XCIII.

GAVROCHE TO THE RESCUE.

SPRING in Paris is very frequently traversed by sharp, violent breezes, which if they do not freeze, chill ; these breezes, which sadden the brightest days, produce exactly the same effect as the blasts of cold wind which enter a warm room through the crevices of a badly-closed door or window. It seems as if the gloomy gate of winter has been left ajar, and that the wind comes from there. In the spring of 1832, the period when the first great epidemic of this century broke out in Europe, these breezes were sharper and more cutting than ever, and some door even more icy than that of winter had been left ajar. It was the door of the sepulchre, and the breath of cholera could be felt in these breezes. From a meteorological point of view these cold winds had the peculiarity that they did not exclude a powerful charge of electricity, and frequent storms, accompanied by thunder and lightning, broke out at this period.

One evening, when these breezes were blowing sharply, so sharply that January seemed to have returned, and the citizens had put on their cloaks again, little Gavroche, still shivering gaily under his rags, was standing as if in ecstasy in front of a hair-dresser's shop in the vicinity of the Orme-Saint Gervais. He was adorned with a woman's woollen shawl, picked up no one knew where, of which he had made a belcher. Little Gavroche appeared to be lost in admiration of a waxen image of a bride, wearing a very low-necked dress, and a wreath of orange-flowers in her hair, which revolved between two lamps, and lavished its smiles on the passers-by : but in reality he was watching the shop to see whether he could not "bone" a cake of soap, which he would afterwards sell for a half-penny to a barber in the suburbs. He frequently breakfasted on one of these cakes, and he called this style of work, for which he had a talent, "shaving the barber." While regarding the bride, and casting sheep's eyes on the cake of soap, he growled between his teeth, "Tuesday, this is not Tuesday, is it Tuesday ? it is perhaps Tuesday, yes it is Tuesday." What this soliloquy referred to was never known, but if it was to the last time he had dined it was three days ago, for the present day was a Friday. The barber, in his shop warmed with a good stove,

was shaving a customer and taking every now and then a side-glance at this enemy, this shivering and impudent gamin, who had his two hands in his pockets, but his mind evidently elsewhere.

While Gavroche was examining the bride, the window, and the Windsor soap, two boys of unequal height, very decently dressed, and younger than himself, one apparently seven, the other five years of age, timidly turned the handle, and entered the shop, asking for something, charity possibly, in a plaintive murmur, which was more like a sob than a prayer. They both spoke together, and their words were unintelligible, because sobs choked the voice of the younger boy, and cold made the teeth of the elder rattle. The barber turned with a furious face, and without laying down his razor drove one into the street with his left hand, the other with his knee, and closed the door again, saying,—

“To come and chill people for nothing!”

The two lads set out again, crying: a cloud had come up in the mean while, and it began raining. Little Gavroche ran up to them, and accosted them thus,—

“What’s the matter with you, babes?”

“We don’t know where to sleep,” the elder replied.

“Is that all?” said Gavroche, “that’s a great matter to cry about, you babes in the wood.” And assuming an accent of tender affection and gentle protection, which was visible through his somewhat pompous superiority, he said,—

“Come with me, brats.”

“Yes, sir,” said the elder boy.

And the two children followed him as they would have done an archbishop, and left off crying. Gavroche led them along the Rue St Antoine, in the direction of the Bastille, and while going off took an indignant and retrospective glance at the barber’s shop.

“That whiting has no heart,” he growled, “he’s an Englishman.”

A girl, seeing the three walking in file, Gavroche at the head, burst into a loud laugh. This laugh was disrespectful to the party.

“Good day, Mamselle Omnibus,” Gavroche said to her.

A moment after the hair-dresser returning to his mind, he added,—

“I made a mistake about the brute: he is not a whiting, but a snake. Barber, I’ll go and fetch a locksmith, and order him to put a bell on your tail.”

This barber had made him aggressive; as he stepped across a

gutter, he addressed a bearded porterness, worthy to meet Faust on the Brocken, and who was holding her broom in her hand,—

"Madame," he said to her, "I see that you go out with your horse."

And after this he plashed the varnished boots of a passer-by.

"Scoundrel!" the gentleman said furiously. Gavroche raised his nose out of the shawl.

"Have you a complaint to make, sir?"

"Yes, of you," said the gentleman.

"The office is closed," Gavroche remarked. "I don't receive any more complaints to-day."

As he went along the street he noticed a girl of thirteen or fourteen, shivering in a gate-way, in such short petticoats that she showed her knees. But the little girl was beginning to get too tall a girl for that; growth plays you such tricks, and the petticoat begins to become short when nudity grows indecent.

"Poor girl," said Gavroche, "she hasn't even a pair of breeches. Here, collar this."

And taking off all the good wool which he had round his neck he threw it over the thin, violet shoulders of the beggar-girl, when the belcher became once again a shawl. The little girl looked at him with an astonished air, and received the shawl in silence. At a certain stage of distress a poor man in his stupor no longer groans at evil, and gives no thanks for kindness. This done,—

"Brr!" said Gavroche, colder than St Martin, who, at any rate, retained one half his cloak. On hearing this Brr, the shower, redoubling its passion, poured down; those wicked skies punish good actions.

"Hilloh!" Gavroche shouted, "what's the meaning of this? it is raining again. My God, if this goes on, I shall withdraw my subscription."

And he set out again.

"No matter," he said as he took a glance at the beggar-girl crouching under her shawl, "she's got a first-rate skin."

And, looking at the clouds, he cried,—*"Sold you are!"*

The two children limped after him, and as they passed one of those thick, close gratings which indicates a baker's, for bread like gold is placed behind a grating, Gavroche turned round.

"By the by, brats, have you dined?"

"We have had nothing to eat, sir, since early this morning," the elder answered.

"Then you haven't either father or mother?" Gavroche continued magisterially.

"I beg your pardon, sir; we have a pa and a ma, but we don't know where they are."

"Sometimes that is better than knowing," said Gavroche, who was a philosopher in his small way.

"We have been walking about for two hours," the lad continued, "and looked for things at the corners of the streets, but found nothing."

"I know," said Gavroche; "the dogs eat everything."

He resumed after a pause,—

"And so we have lost our authors. We don't know what we have done with them. That isn't the right thing, brats, and you didn't ought to turn grown-up people out to grass in that way. Well, I suppose I must find them a shake-down."

He did not ask them any more questions, for what could be more simple than to have no domicile? The elder of the boys, who had almost entirely recovered the happy carelessness of childhood, made this remark: "It is funny for all that, for mamma said she would take us to fetch blessed box, on Palm Sunday. Mamma is a lady who lives with Mamselle Miss."

"—Tanflute!" Gavroche added.

He stopped, and for some minutes searched all sorts of corners which he had in his rags: at length he raised his head with an air which only wished to be satisfied, but was in reality triumphant,—

"Calm yourselves, my infants; here is supper for three."

And he drew a sou from one of his pockets; without giving the lads time to feel amazed, he pushed them both before him into the baker's shop, and laid his sou on the counter, exclaiming,—

"Boy, five centimes' worth of bread."

The baker, who was the master in person, took up a loaf and a knife.

"In three pieces, my boy," Gavroche remarked, and he added with dignity,—

"We are three."

And seeing that the baker, after examining the three suppers, had taken a loaf of black bread, he thrust his finger into his nose, with as imperious a sniff as if he had the great Frederick's pinch of snuff on his thumb, and cast in the baker's face this indignant remark,—

"Keksekça?"

Those of our readers who might be tempted to see in this remark of Gavroche's to the baker a Russian or Polish word, or one of the savage cries which the Ioways or the Botocudos hurl at each other across the deserted streams, are warned that this is a word which they (our readers) employ daily, and which

signifies "*qu'est ce que c'est que cela ?*" The baker perfectly comprehended, and replied,—

"Why, it is bread, very good seconds bread."

"You mean black bread," Gavroche remarked, with a calm and cold disdain. "White bread, my lad; I stand treat."

The baker could not refrain from smiling, and while cutting some white bread gazed at them in a compassionate way which offended Gavroche.

"Well," he said, "what is there about us that you look at us in that way?"

When the bread was cut, the baker put the sou in the till, and Gavroche said to the two boys,—

"Grub away."

The boys looked at him in surprise, and Gavroche burst into a laugh.

"Oh yes, that's true, they don't understand yet, they are so little."

And he continued,—"*Eat.*"

At the same time he gave each of them a lump of bread. Thinking that the elder, who appeared to him more worthy of his conversation, merited some special encouragement, and ought to have any hesitation about satisfying his hunger removed, he added, as he gave him the larger lump,—

"Shove that into your musket."

There was one piece smaller than the two others, and he took that for himself. The poor boys, Gavroche included, were starving; while tearing the bread with their teeth, they blocked up the baker's shop, who, now that he was paid, looked at them angrily.

"Let us return to the street," said Gavroche.

They started again in the direction of the Bastille, and from time to time as they passed lighted shops, the younger boy stopped to see what o'clock it was by a leaden watch hung round his neck by a string.

"Well, he is a baby," said Gavroche.

Then he thoughtfully growled between his teeth, "No matter, if I had brats of my own I would take more care of them than that."

As they were finishing their bread, they reached the corner of that morose Rue de Ballet at the end of which the low and hostile wicket of la Force is visible.

"Hilloh, is that you, Gavroche?" some one said.

"Hilloh, is that you, Montparnasse?" said Gavroche.

It was a man who accosted Gavroche, no other than Mont-

parnasse disguised with blue spectacles, but Gavroche was able to recognize him.

"My eye!" Gavroche went on, "you have a skin of the colour of a linseed poultice and blue spectacles like a doctor. That's your style, on the word of an old man!"

"Silence," said Montparnasse, "not so loud;" and he quickly dragged Gavroche out of the light of the shops: the two little boys followed mechanically, holding each other by the hand. When they were under the black arch of a gateway, protected from eyes and rain, Montparnasse remarked,—

"Do you know where I am going?"

"To the abbey of Go-up-with-regret" (the scaffold), said Gavroche.

"Joker!"

And Montparnasse added,—

"I am going to meet Babet."

"Ah!" said Gavroche, "her name is Babet is it?"

Montparnasse lowered his voice,—

"It is not a she, but a he."

"I thought he was buckled up."

"He has unfastened the buckle," Montparnasse replied.

And he hurriedly told the boy that, on that very morning, Babet, while being removed to the Conciergerie, escaped by turning to the left instead of the right in the "police office passage."

Gavroche admired his skill.

"What a dentist!" he said.

Montparnasse added a few details about Babet's escape, and ended with, "Oh, that is not all."

Gavroche, while talking, had seized a cane which Montparnasse held in his hand: he mechanically pulled at the upper part, and a dagger blade became visible.

"Ah!" he said as he quickly thrust it back, "you have brought your gendarme with you disguised as a civilian."

Montparnasse winked.

"The deuce!" Gavroche continued, "are you going to have a turn-up with the slops?"

"There's no knowing," Montparnasse answered carelessly, "it's always as well to have a pin about you."

Gavroche pressed him.

"What are you going to do to-night?"

Montparnasse again became serious, and said, mincing his words,—

"Some things."

And he suddenly changed the conversation.

"By the by—"

"What?"

"Something that happened the other day. Just fancy. I meet a bourgeois, and he makes me a present of a sermon and a purse. I put it in my pocket, a moment later I feel for it, and there was nothing there."

"Only the sermon," said Gavroche.

"But where are you going now?" Montparnasse continued.

Gavroche pointed to his two protégés, and said,—

"I am going to put these two children to bed."

"Where?"

"At my house."

"Have you a lodging?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"Inside the elephant," said Gavroche.

Montparnasse, though naturally not easy to astonish, could not refrain from the exclamation,

"Inside the elephant?"

"Well, yes, kekçaa?"

This is another word belonging to the language which nobody reads and everybody speaks; kekçaa, signifies, *qu'est-ce que cela a?* The gamin's profound remark brought Montparnasse back to calmness and good sense: he seemed to entertain a better opinion of Gavroche's lodgings.

"Ah yes," he said, "elephant. Are you comfortable there?"

"Very," Gavroche replied. "Most comfortable." There are no draughts as there are under the bridges."

"How do you get in—is there a hole?"

"Of course there is, but you have no need to mention it; it's between the front legs, and the bobbies don't know it."

"And you climb in? yes, I understand."

"One turn, cric crac, it's done, and there's no one to be seen."

After a pause Gavroche added,—

"I shall have a ladder for these young ones."

Montparnasse burst into a laugh.

"Where the devil did you pick up those brats?"

"A barber made me a present of them."

In the mean while Montparnasse had become pensive.

"You recognized me very easily," he said.

He took from his pocket two small objects, which were

quills wrapped in cotton, and thrust one into each nostril; they made him quite a different nose.

"That changes you," said Gavroche; "you are not so ugly now, and you ought to keep them in for good."

Montparnasse was a handsome fellow, but Gavroche was fond of a joke.

"Without any humbug," Montparnasse asked; "what do you think of me now?"

It was also a different sound of voice; in a second Montparnasse had become unrecognizable.

"Oh! play Porrichinelle for us!" Gavroche exclaimed.

The two lads, who had heard nothing up to this moment, engaged as they were themselves in thrusting their fingers up their noses, drew nearer on hearing this name, and gazed at Montparnasse with a beginning of joy and admiration. Unhappily Montparnasse was in no humour for jesting; he laid his hand on Gavroche's shoulder, and said, with a stress on each word,—

"Listen to what I tell you, boy; if I were on the square, with my dog, my knife, and my wife, and you were to offer me ten double sous I would not refuse to work, but we are not at Shrove Tuesday."*

This strange sentence produced a singular effect on the gamin; he turned round sharply, looked with his little bright eyes all around, and noticed a few yards off a policeman with his back turned to them. Gavroche let an "all-right" slip from him, which he at once repressed, and shook Montparnasse's hand.

"Well, good-night," he said; "I am off to my elephant with my brats. Should you happen to want me any night you'll find me there. I lodge in the *entresol*, and there's no porter; ask for Monsieur Gavroche."

"All right," said Montparnasse.

And they parted, Montparnasse going toward the Grève, and Gavroche toward the Bastille. The youngest boy, dragged on by his brother, whom Gavroche dragged along in his turn, looked round several times to watch Porrichinelle go away.

The enigmatical sentence by which Montparnasse informed Gavroche of the presence of the policeman contained no other talisman but the sound *dig* repeated five or six times under various forms. This syllable, not pronounced separately, but artistically mingled with the words of a sentence, means

* Ecoute ce que je te dis, garçon, si j'étais sur la place, avec mon dogue, ma dague, et ma digue, et si vous me prodiguez dix gros sous, je ne refuserais d'y goupiner, mais nous ne sommes pas le Mardi-gras.

"Take care, we cannot speak freely." There was also in Montparnasse's remark a literary beauty which escaped Gavroche's notice, that is, "*mon doque, ma dague, et ma digue*," a phrase of the Temple slang greatly in use among the bandits of the great age in which Molière wrote and Callot designed.

Twenty years back there might have been seen in the south-eastern corner of the square of the Bastille, near the canal dock, dug in the old moat of the citadel-prison, a quaint monument, which has already been effaced from the memory of Parisians, and which should have left some trace, as it was an idea of the "Member of the Institute, Commander-in-Chief of the army of Egypt." We say monument, though it was only a plaster cast, but this cast itself, a prodigious sketch, the grand corpse of a Napoleonic idea which two or three successive puffs of wind carried away each time further from us, had become historic, and assumed something definitive, which formed a contrast with its temporary appearance. It was an elephant, forty feet high, constructed of carpentry and masonry, bearing on its back a castle which resembled a house, once painted green by some plasterer, and now painted black by the heavens, the rain, and time. In this deserted and uncovered corner of the square the wide forehead of the colossus, its trunk, its tusks, its castle, its enormous back, and its four feet like columns, produced at night upon the starlit sky a surprising and terrible outline. No one knew what it meant, and it seemed a sort of symbol of the popular strength. It was gloomy, enigmatical, and immense; it looked like a powerful phantom visible and erect by the side of the invisible spectre of the Bastille. Few strangers visited this edifice, and no passer-by looked at it. It was falling in ruins, and each season, plaster becoming detached from its flanks, made horrible wounds upon it. The "Ediles," as they were called in the fashionable slang, had forgotten it since 1814; it stood there in its corner, gloomy, sickly, crumbling away, surrounded by rotting palings, which were sullied every moment by drunken drivers; there were yawning cracks in its stomach, a lath issued from its tail, and tall grass grew between its legs; and as the level of the square had risen during the last thirty years through that slow and continuous movement which insensibly elevates the soil of great cities, it was in a hollow, and it seemed as if the earth were giving way beneath it. It was unclean, despised, repulsive, and superb; ugly in the eyes of cits, but melancholy in the eyes of the thinker. It had something about it of the ordure which is swept away, and something of the majesty which is decapitated.

As we said, at night its appearance changed ; for night is the real medium of everything which is shadow. So soon as twilight set in the old elephant was transfigured ; and it assumed a placid and redoubtable appearance in the formidable serenity of the darkness. As it belonged to the past it belonged to night, and this obscurity suited its grandeur. This monument, rude, broad, heavy, rough, austere, and almost shapeless, but most assuredly majestic, and imprinted with a species of magnificent and savage gravity, has disappeared to allow the sort of gigantic stove, adorned with its chimney-pot, to reign in peace, which was substituted for the frowning fortalice with its mere towers, much in the same way as the bourgeoisie are substituted for feudalism. It is very simple that a stove should be the symbol of an epoch in which a copper contains the power. This period will pass away, it is already passing away ; people are beginning to understand that if there may be strength in a boiler there can only be power in a brain ; in other words, that what leads and carries away the world is not locomotives but ideas. Attach locomotives to ideas, and then it is all right ; but do not take the horse for the rider.

However this may be, to return to the Bastille square, the architect of the elephant managed to produce something grand with plaster, while the architect of the stove-pipe has succeeded in making something little out of bronze. This stove-pipe, which was christened a sonorous name, and called the Column of July, this spoiled monument of an abortive revolution, was still wrapped up, in 1832, in an immense sheet of carpentry-work, which we regret for our part, and a vast enclosure of planks, which completed the isolation of the elephant. It was to this corner of this square, which was scarce lighted by the reflection of a distant oil-lamp, that the gamin led the two children.

(Allow us to interrupt our narrative here, and remind our readers that we are recording the simple truth, and that twenty years ago a boy, who was caught sleeping in the inside of the elephant of the Bastille, was brought before the police on the charge of vagabondage and breaking a public monument.)

On coming near the colossus Gavroche understood the effect which the infinitely great may produce on the infinitely little, and said,—

“Don't be frightened, brats.”

Then he went through a hole in the palings into the ground round the elephant, and helped the children to pass through the breach. The lads, a little frightened, followed

Gavroche without a word, and confided in this little Providence in rags who had given them bread and promised them a bed. A ladder, employed by workmen at the column by day, was lying along the palings; Gavroche raised it with singular vigour, and placed it against one of the elephant's fore legs. At the point where the ladder ended a sort of black hole could be distinguished in the belly of the colossus. Gavroche pointed out the ladder and the hole to his guests, and said, "Go up, and go in." The two little boys looked at each other in terror.

"You are frightened, brats!" Gavroche exclaimed, and added, "you shall see."

He clung round the elephant's wrinkled foot, and in a twinkling, without deigning to employ the ladder, he reached the hole. He went in like a lizard gliding into a crevice, and a moment after the boys saw his head, like a white, livid form, on the edge of the hole, which was full of darkness.

"Well," he cried, "come up, my blessed babes. You will see how snug it is. Come up, you," he said to the elder. "I will hold your hand."

The little boys nudged each other, for the gamin at once frightened and reassured them, and then it was raining very hard. The elder boy ventured, and the younger, on seeing his brother ascending and himself left alone between the feet of this great beast, felt greatly inclined to cry, but did not dare. The elder climbed up the rungs of the ladder in a very tottering way, and as he did so Gavroche encouraged him by exclamations of a fencing-master to his pupils, or of a muleteer to his mules.

"Don't be frightened—that is it—keep on moving—set your foot there—now, your hand here—bravo!"

And when he was within reach he quickly and powerfully seized him by the arm, and drew him to him.

"Swallowed!" he said.

The boy had passed through the crevice.

"Now," said Gavroche, "wait for me. Pray sit down, sir."

And, leaving the hole in the same way as he had entered it, he slid down the elephant's leg with the agility of a squirrel, fell on his feet in the grass, seized the youngest boy round the waist and planted him on the middle of the ladder; then he began ascending behind him, shouting to the elder boy,—

"I'll push him and you'll pull him."

In a second the little fellow was pushed up, dragged, pulled, and drawn through the hole before he knew where he was, and Gavroche, entering after him kicked away the ladder, which fell

in the grass, and clapped his hands as he shouted, "There we are! long live General Lafayette!" This explosion over, he added, "Brats, you are in my house."

Gavroche was, in fact, at home. Oh! unexpected utility of the useless! oh, charity of great things! oh, goodness of the giants! this huge monument, which had contained a thought of the emperor, had become the lodging of a gamin; the brat had been accepted and sheltered by the colossus. The cits in their Sunday clothes who passed by the elephant of the Bastille were prone to say, as they measured it with a contemptuous look from the eyes flush with their head, Of what service is that? It served to save from cold, from frost, from damp and rain, to protect from the winter wind, to preserve from sleeping in the mud, which entails fever, and from sleeping in the snow, which causes death, a little fatherless and motherless boy, without bread, clothes, or shelter. It served to shelter the innocent boy whom society repulsed. It served to diminish the public wrong. It was a lair opened to him against whom all doors were closed. It seemed as if the old wretched mastodon, attacked by vermin and oblivion, covered with warts, mould, and ulcers, tottering, crumbling, abandoned, and condemned, a species of colossal mendicant asking in vain the alms of a benovolent glance in the midst of the highway, had taken pity on this other beggar, the poor pigmy who walked about without shoes on his feet, without a ceiling over his head, blowing his fingers, dressed in rags, and supporting life on what was thrown away. This is of what use the elephant of the Bastille was, and this idea of Napoleon's, disdained by men, had been taken up again by God; what had only been illustrious had become august. The emperor would have needed, in order to realize what he meditated, porphyry, bronze, iron, gold, and marble, but for God the old collection of planks, beams, and plaster was sufficient. The emperor had had a dream of genius; in this Titanic elephant, armed, prodigious, raising its trunk, and spouting all around glad and living waters, he wished to incarnate the people, and God had made a greater thing of it, for He lodged a child in it.

The hole by which Gavroche entered was a breach scarce visible from the outside, as it was concealed, as we said, under the elephant's belly, and so narrow that only cats and boys could pass through it.

"Let us begin," said Gavroche, "by telling the porter that we are not at home."

And plunging into the darkness with certainty like a man who knows every corner of the room, he took a plank and

stopped up the hole. Gavroche plunged again into the darkness, the children heard the phizzing of a match dipped into the bottle of phosphorus, for lucifer matches did not yet exist,—and the Fumade fire-producer represented progress at that day. A sudden light made them wink. Gavroche had lit one of those rope's-ends dipped in pitch which are called "cellar rats:" and this thing, which smoked more than it illumined, rendered the inside of the elephant indistinctly visible. Gavroche's two guests looked around them, and had much such a feeling as any one would feel if shut up in the Heidelberg tun, or, better still, what Jonas must have experienced in the biblical belly of the whale. An entire gigantic skeleton was visible to them and enveloped them; above their heads a long brown beam, from which sprang at regular distances massive cross bars, represented the spine with the ribs, stalactites of plaster hung down like viscera, and vast spider webs formed from one side to the other dusty diaphragms. Here and there in corners could be seen large black spots which seemed alive, and changed places rapidly, with a quick and startled movement. The pieces which had fallen from the elephant's back on its belly had filled up the concavity, so that it was possible to walk on it as on a flooring. The youngest lad nudged his brother and said,—

"It is black."

This remark caused Gavroche to object, for the petrified air of the two lads rendered a shock necessary.

"What are you talking about?" he shouted; "what's that nonsense, eh? you're showing your disgust, are you? I suppose you want the Tuileries? are you brutes? if you are, say so, but I warn you that I'm not a fellow to put up with any humbug. Ah, ah, to hear you talk one would think that your father was a prince of the blood."

A little roughness is good in terror, for it reassures; the two children drew nearer to Gavroche, who, affected paternally by this confidence, passed from sternness to gentleness, and addressing the younger lad,—

"You little goose," he said,—toning down the insult with a caressing inflection of the voice,—"*it is outside that it's black. Outside it rains, and here it does not rain; outside it is cold, and here there is not a breath of wind; outside there is a heap of people, and here there's nobody; outside there's not even the moon, and here there's a candle, the deuce take it all.*"

The two lads began looking round the apartment with less terror, but Gavroche did not allow them any leisure for contemplation.

"Quick," he said.

And he thrust them toward what we are very happy to call the end of the room, where his bed was. Gavroche's bed was perfect, that is to say, there was a mattress, a coverlet, and an alcove with curtains. The mattress was a straw mat, and the coverlet was a rather wide wrapper of coarse, grey wool, very warm, and nearly new. This is what the alcove was,—three long props were driven securely into the plaster soil, that is to say, the elephant's belly, two in front and one behind, and were fastened by a cord at the top, so as to form a hollow pyramid. These props supported a grating of brass wire, simply laid upon them, but artistically fastened with iron wire, so that it entirely surrounded the three poles. A row of large stones fastened the lattice-work down to the ground, so that nothing could pass, and this lattice was merely a piece of the brass work put up in aviaries in menageries. Gavroche's bed was under the wire-work as in a cage, and the whole resembled an Esquimaux's tent. Gavroche moved a few of the stones that held down the lattice work in front, and shouted to the lads,—

"Now then, on all fours."

He made his guests enter the cage cautiously, then went in after them, brought the stones together again, and hermetically closed the opening. They lay down all three on the mat, and though they were all so short, not one of them could stand upright in the alcove. Gavroche still held the "cellar rat" in his hand.

"Now," he said, "to roost; I am going to suppress the chandelier."

"What is that, sir?" the elder of the lads asked Gavroche, pointing to the brass grating.

"That," said Gavroche gravely, "is on account of the rats. Go to roost!"

Still he thought himself obliged to add a few words of instruction for these young creatures, and continued,—

"It comes from the Jardin des Plantes, and is employed to guard ferocious animals. There is a whole store-house full; you have only to climb over a wall, crawl through a window, and pass under a door, and you can have as much as you like."

While speaking he wrapped up the little boy in the blanket, who murmured,—

"Oh, that is nice, it's so warm!"

Gavroche took a glance of satisfaction at the coverlet.

"That also comes from the Jardin des Plantes," he said, "I nobbled it from the monkeys."

And pointing out to the elder one the straw mat on which he

was lying, which was very thick and admirably made, he added,—

“That belonged to the giraffe.”

After a pause he continued,—

“The beasts had all that, and I took him from them, and they were not at all angry, for I told them that I wanted them for the elephant.”

There was another interval of silence, after which he continued, “You climb over walls and take a sight at the government, that’s the dodge.”

The two lads gazed with a timid and stupefied respect at this intrepid and inventive being, a vagabond like them, isolated like them, weak like them, who had something admirable and omnipotent about him, who appeared to them supernatural, and whose face was composed of all the grimaces of an old mountebank, mingled with the simplest and most charming smile.

“Then, sir,” the elder lad said timidly, “you are not afraid of the police?”

Gavroche limited himself to answering,—

“Brat! you mustn’t say policemen, but slops.”

The younger had his eyes wide open, but said nothing; as he was at the edge of the mat, the elder being in the centre, Gavroche tucked in the coverlet round him as a mother would have done, and raised the mat under his head with old rags, so as to make him a pillow. Then he turned to the elder boy,—

“Well! it is jolly here, eh?”

“Oh yes!” the lad answered, as he looked at Gavroche with the expression of a saved angel.

The two poor little fellows, who were wet through, began to grow warm again.

“By the by,” Gavroche went on, “why were you blubbering?”

And pointing to the younger boy he said to his brother,—

“A fondling like that, I don’t say no; but a tall chap like you, when he cries, looks like a stuck pig.”

“Well, sir,” the lad said, “we hadn’t any lodging to go to.”

“Brat,” Gavroche remarked, “you mustn’t say lodging, but ken.”

“And then we felt afraid of being all alone like that in the night.”

“People don’t say night, but gropus.”

“Thank you, sir,” said the boy.

“Listen to me,” Gavroche went on. “You must never blubber for anything. I’ll take care of you, and you’ll see

what fun we shall have. In summer we'll go to the Glacière with Navet, a pal of mine; we'll bathe in the dock, and run about naked on the timber floats in front of the bridge of Austerlitz, for that makes the washerwomen ferocious. They yell, they kick, and, Lord! if you only knew how ridiculous they are! We'll go and see the skeleton man, he's all alive oh at the Champs Elysées, and that parishioner is as thin as a church-mouse. And then I will take you to the play, and let you see Frederick Lemaitre; I get tickets, for I know some actors, and even performed myself once in a piece; we were a lot of boys who ran about under a canvas, and that made the sea. I will get you an engagement at my theatre. We will go and see the savages, but they ain't real savages, they wear pink fleshing which form creases, and you can see repairs made at their elbows with white thread. After that we will go to the opera, and enter with the clappers, who are very well selected at the opera, though I wouldn't care to be seen with them on the Boulevard. At the opera, just fancy, they're people who pay their twenty sous, but they are asses, and we call them dish-clouts. And, then, we will go and see a man guillotined, and I'll point out the executioner to you; he lives in the Rue de Marais, and his name's Samson, and he's got a letter-box at his door. Ah! we shall amuse ourselves famously."

At this moment a drop of pitch fell on Gavroche's hand, and recalled him to the realities of life.

"The devil," he said, "the match is wearing out. Pay attention! I can't afford more than a sou a month for lighting, and when people go to bed they are expected to sleep. We haven't the time to read Monsieur Paul de Kock's romances. Besides, the light might pass through the crevices of the gate, and the slops might see it."

"And then," the elder lad, who alone dared to speak to Gavroche and answer him, "a spark might fall on the straw, and we must be careful not to set the house on fire."

"You mustn't say 'set a house a-fire,'" Gavroche remarked, "but 'blaze the crib.'"

The storm grew more furious, and through the thunder-peals the rain could be heard pattering on the back of the colossus.

"The rain's sold!" said Gavroche. "I like to hear the contents of the water bottle running down the legs of the house. Winter's an ass, it loses its time, it loses its trouble, it can't drown us, and so that is the reason why the old water-carrier is so growling with us."

This allusion to the thunder, whose consequences Gavroche,

in his quality as a nineteenth-century philosopher, accepted, was followed by a lengthened flash, so dazzling that a portion of it passed through the hole in the elephant's belly. Almost at the same moment the thunder roared, and very furiously: the two little boys uttered a cry, and rose so quickly that the brass grating was almost thrown down; but Gavroche turned toward them his bold face, and profited by the thunder-clap to burst into a laugh.

"Be calm, my children, and do not upset the edifice. That's fine thunder of the right sort, and it isn't like that humbugging lightning. It's almost as fine as at the Ambigu."

This said, he restored order in the grating, softly pushed the two lads on to the bed, pressed their knees to make them lie full length, and cried,—

"Since *le bon Dieu* is lighting his candle, I can put out mine. Children, my young humans, we must sleep, for it's very bad not to sleep. It makes you stink in the throat, as people say in fashionable society. Wrap yourselves well up in the blanket, for I am going to put the light out; are you all right?"

"Yes," said the elder boy, "I'm all right, and feel as if I had a feather pillow under my head."

"You mustn't say 'head,'" Gavroche cried, "but nut."

The two lads crept close together; Gavroche made them all right on the mat, and pulled the blanket up to their ears; then he repeated for the third time in the hieratic language, "Roost."

And he blew out the rope's end. The light was scarce extinguished ere a singular trembling began to shake the trellis-work under which the three children were lying. It was a multitude of dull rubbings which produced a metallic sound, as if claws and teeth were assailing the copper wire, and this was accompanied by all sorts of little shrill cries. The little boy of five years of age, hearing this noise above his head, and chilled with terror, nudged his elder brother, but he was "roosting" already, as Gavroche had ordered him; then the little one, unable to hold out any longer for fright, dared to address Gavroche, but in a very low voice and holding his breath.

"Sir?"

"Hilloh!" said Gavroche, who had just closed his eyes.

"What is that?"

"It's the rats," Gavroche answered.

"And he laid his head again on the mat. The rats, which were really by thousands in the elephant's carcass, and were the live black spots to which we have alluded, had been held in

"What are rats?"

"They're mice."

This explanation slightly reassured the child, seen white mice in his life, and had not been afraid still he raised his voice again.

"Sir?"

"Well?" Gavroche repeated.

"Why don't you keep a cat?"

"I had one," Gavroche answered; "I brought they ate it for me."

This second explanation undid the work of the first; the child began trembling once more; the dialogue between him and Gavroche was resumed for the fourth time.

"Sir?"

"Well?"

"What was eaten?"

"The cat."

"What ate the cat?"

"The rats."

"The mice?"

"Yes, the rats."

The child, terrified by these mice which ate him, continued,—

"Would those mice eat us?"

"Oh Lord, yes!" Gavroche said.

The child's terror was at its height, but Gavroche said,

"Don't be frightened, they can't get in. And."


a winter wind, which was mingled with the rain, blew in gusts; the patrols examined doors, enclosures, and dark corners, and, while searching for nocturnal vagabonds, passed silently before the elephant; the monster, erect and motionless, with its eyes open in the darkness, seemed to be dreaming, as if satisfied at its good deed, and sheltered from the sky and rain the three poor sleeping children. In order to understand what is going to follow, it must be remembered that at this period the main-guard of the Bastille was situated at the other end of the square, and that what took place near the elephant could neither be prevented nor heard by the sentry. Toward the end of the hour which immediately precedes day-break, a man came running out of the Rue St Antoine, crossed the square, went round the great enclosure of the column of July, and slipped through the palings under the elephant's belly. If any light had fallen on this man, it might have been guessed from his thoroughly drenched state that he had passed the night in the rain. On getting under the elephant he uttered a peculiar cry, which belongs to no human language, and which a parrot alone could reproduce. He repeated twice this cry, of which the following orthography scarce supplies any idea, "*Kirikikiou!*" At the second cry a clear, gay, and young voice answered from the elephant's belly, "*Yes!*" Almost immediately the plank that closed the hole was removed, and left a passage for a lad, who slid down the elephant's leg and fell at the man's feet. It was Gavroche, and the man was Montparnasse. As for the cry of *Kirikikiou*, it was doubtless what the lad meant to say by, "*You will ask for Monsieur Gavroche.*" On hearing it he jumped up with a start, crept out of his alcove by moving the grating a little, and then carefully closing it again, after which he opened the trap and went down. The man and the child silently recognized each other in the night, and Montparnasse confined himself to saying,—

"We want you, come and give us a help."

The gamin asked for no other explanation.

"Here I am," he said.

And the pair proceeded toward the Rue St Antoine, whence Montparnasse had come, winding rapidly through the long file of market carts which were coming into town at the time. The gardeners, lying on their waggons among their salads and vegetables, half asleep, and rolled up to the eyes in their great-coats, owing to the beating rain, did not even look at these strange passers-by.



CHAPTER XCIV.

INCIDENTS OF AN ESCAPE.

THIS is what occurred on this same night at la Force. An escape had been concerted between Babet, Brujon, Gueulemer, and Thénardier, although Thénardier was in secret confinement. Babet had managed the affair on his own account during the day, as we heard from Montparnasse's narrative to Gavroche, and Montparnasse was to help them outside. Brujon, while spending a month in a punishment room, had time, first, to make a rope, and, secondly, to ripen a plan. Formerly, these severe places, in which prison discipline leaves the prisoner to himself, were composed of four stone walls, a stone ceiling, a brick pavement, a camp-bed, a grated sky-light, and a gate lined with iron, and were called dungeons; but the dungeon was considered too horrible, so now it is composed of an iron gate, a grated sky-light, a camp-bed, a brick pavement, a stone ceiling, four stone walls, and it is called a "punishment room." A little day-light is visible about mid-day. The inconvenience of these rooms, which, as we see, are not dungeons, is to leave beings to think who ought to be set to work. Brujon, therefore, reflected, and he left the punishment room with a cord. As he was considered very dangerous in the Charlemagne yard, he was placed in the New Building, and the first thing he found there was Gueulemer, the second a nail; Gueulemer, that is to say, crime, and a nail, that is to say, liberty.

Brujon, of whom it is time to form a complete idea, was, with the appearance of a delicate complexion and a deeply premeditated languor, a polished, intelligent robber, who possessed a caressing look and an atrocious smile. His look was the result of his will, and his smile the result of his nature. His first studies in his art were directed to roofs, and he had given a great impulse to the trade of lead-stealers, who strip roofs and carry away gutters by the process called *au gras double*. What finally rendered the moment favourable for an attempted escape was that workmen were at this very moment engaged in re-laying and re-tipping the prison slates. The Saint Bernard was not absolutely isolated from the Charlemagne and St Louis yards, for there were on the roof scaffolding and ladders, in other words, bridges and staircases, on the side of deliverance.

The New Building, which was the most cracked and decrepit affair possible to imagine, was the weak point of the building. Saltpetre had so gnawn the walls that it had been found necessary to prop up and shore the ceilings of the dormitories, because stones became detached and fell on the prisoners' beds. In spite of this antiquity, the error was committed of confining in the New Building the most dangerous prisoners, and placing in it the "heavy cases," as is said in the prison jargon. The New Building contained four sleeping-wards, one above the other, and a garret-floor called the "Fine air." A large stove pipe, probably belonging to some old kitchen of the Ducs de la Force, started from the ground-floor, passed through the four storeys, cut in two the sleeping-wards, in which it figured as a sort of flattened pillar, and issued through a hole in the roof. Gueulemer and Brujon were in the same ward, and had been placed through precaution on the ground-floor. Accident willed it that the head of their beds rested against the stove pipe. Thénardier was exactly above their heads in the attic called Fine air.

The passer-by, who stops in the Rue Culture Sainte Cathérine, after passing the Fireman's barracks, and in front of the Bath-house gateway, sees a court-yard full of flowers and shrubs in boxes, at the end of which is a small white rotunda with two wings, enlivened by green shutters, the bucolic dream of Jean Jacques. Not ten years ago there rose above this rotunda a black, enormous, frightful, naked wall, which was the outer wall of la Force. This wall behind this rotunda was like a glimpse of Milton caught behind Berquin. High though it was, this wall was surmounted by an even blacker roof, which could be seen beyond,—it was the roof of the New Building.

Four dormer windows protected by bars could be seen in it, and they were the windows of Fine air, and a chimney passed through the roof, which was the chimney of the sleeping-wards. Fine air, the attic-floor of the New Building, was a species of large hall, closed with triple gratings and iron-lined doors, starred with enormous nails. When you entered by the north end, you had on your left the four dormers, and on your right facing these, four square and spacious cages, separated by narrow passages, built up to breast-height of masonry, and the rest to the roof of iron bars. Thénardier had been confined in solitary punishment since the night of Feb. 3. It was never discovered how, or by what connivance, he succeeded in procuring and concealing a bottle of that prepared wine, invented, so 'tis said, by Desrues, in which a narcotic is mixed, and which the band of the Endormeurs rendered celebrated. There are in many prisons treacherous turnkeys, half gaolers, half robbers,

who assist in escapes, sell to the police a faithless domesticity, and "make the handle of the salad-basket dance."

On this very night, then, when little Gavroche picked up the two straying children, Brujon and Gueulemer, who knew that Babet, who had escaped that same morning, was waiting for them in the street with Montparnasse, gently rose, and began breaking open with a nail which Brujon had found the stove-pipe against which their beds were. The rubbish fell on Brujon's bed, so that it was not heard, and the gusts of wind mingled with the thunder shook the doors on their hinges, and produced a frightful and hideous row in the prison. Those prisoners who awoke pretended to fall asleep again, and left Brujon and Gueulemer to do as they pleased; and Brujon was skilful, and Gueulemer was vigorous. Before any sound had reached the watchman sleeping in the grated cell which looked into the ward, the wall was broken through, the chimney escalated, the iron trellice-work which close the upper opening of the chimney forced, and the two formidable bandits were on the roof. The rain and the wind were tremendous, and the roof was slippery.

"What a fine night for an escape!" said Brujon.

An abyss of six feet in width and eighty feet deep separated them from the surrounding wall, and at the bottom of this abyss they could see a sentry's musket gleaming in the darkness. They fastened to the ends of the chimney bars which they had just broken the rope which Brujon had woven in the cell, threw the other end over the outer wall, crossed the abyss at a bound, clung to the coping of the wall, bestraddled it, glided in turn along the rope to a little roof which joins the Bath-house, pulled their rope to them, jumped into the yard of the Bath-house, pulled the porter's string, opened the gateway, and found themselves in the street. Not three-quarters of an hour had elapsed since they were standing on the bed, nail in hand, and with their plan in their heads; a few minutes after, they had rejoined Babet and Montparnasse, who were prowling in the neighbourhood. On drawing the cord to them they broke it, and a piece had remained fastened to the chimney on the roof, but they had met with no other accident beyond almost entirely skinning their fingers. On this night Thénardier was warned, though it was impossible to discover how, and did not go to sleep. At about one in the morning, when the night was very black, he saw two shadows passing, in the rain and gusts, the window opposite his cage. One stopped just long enough to give a look; it was Brujon. Thénardier saw him, and understood—that was enough for him. Thénar-

dier, reported to be a burglar, and detained on the charge of attempting to obtain money at night by violence, was kept under constant watch, and a sentry, relieved every two hours, walked in front of his cage with a loaded musket. The Fine air was lighted by a sky-light, and the prisoner had on his feet a pair of fetters weighing fifty pounds. Every day at four in the afternoon, a turnkey, escorted by two mastiffs—such things still happened at that day—entered his cage, placed near his bed a black loaf of two pounds' weight, a water-jug, and a bowl of very weak broth in which a few beans floated, inspected his fetters, and tapped the bars. This man with his dogs returned twice during the night.

Thénardier had obtained permission to keep a sort of iron pin which he used to nail his bread to the wall, in order, as he said, "to preserve it from the rats." As Thénardier was under a constant watch, this pin did not seem dangerous; still it was remembered at a later day that a turnkey said, "It would have been better only to leave him a wooden skewer." At two in the morning the sentry who was an old soldier, was changed, and a recruit substituted for him. A few minutes after, the man with the dogs paid his visit, and went away without having noticed anything, except the youth and peasant look of the "Tourelourou." Two hours after, when they came to relieve this conscript, they found him asleep, and lying like a log by the side of Thénardier's cage. As for the prisoner, he was no longer there; his severed fetters lay on the ground, and there was a hole in the ceiling of his cage, and another above it in the roof. A plank of his bed had been torn out and carried off, for it could not be found. In the cell was also found the half-empty bottle, containing the rest of the drugged wine with which the young soldier had been sent to sleep. The soldier's bayonet had disappeared. At the moment when all this was discovered, Thénardier was supposed to be out of reach; the truth was, that he was no longer in the New Building, but was still in great danger. Thénardier, on reaching the roof of the New Building, found the remainder of Brujon's rope hanging from the chimney bars, but as the broken cord was much too short, he was unable to cross the outer wall as Brujon and Gueulemer had done.

When you turn out of the Rue des Ballets into the Rue du Roi de Sicile, you notice almost directly on your right a dirty hole. In the last century a house stood here, of which only the back wall exists, a perfect ruin of a wall which rises to the height of a third storey between the adjacent buildings. This

ruin can be recognized by two large square windows, still visible; the centre one, the one nearest the right-hand gable, is barred by a shored-up beam, and through these windows could be seen, formerly, a lofty lugubrious wall, which was a portion of the outer wall of la Force. The gap which the demolished house has left in the street is half filled up with a hoarding of rotten planks, supported by five stone pillars, and inside is a small hut built against the still standing ruin. The boarding has a door in it which, a few years ago, was merely closed with a hasp. It was the top of this ruin which Thénardier had attained a little after three in the morning. How did he get there? This was never explained or understood. The lightning flashes must at once have impeded and helped him. Did he employ the ladders and scaffolding of the slaters to pass from roof to roof, over the buildings of the Charlemagne yard, those of the St Louis yard, the outer, and thence reach the ruined wall in the Rue du Roi de Sicile? But there were in this passage solutions of continuity, which seemed to render it impossible. Had he laid the plank from his bed as a bridge from the roof of Fine air to the outer wall, and crawled on his stomach along the coping, all round the prison till he reached the ruin? But the outer wall of la Force was very irregular, it rose and sank; it was low at the Sappers' barracks, and rose again at the Bath-house; it was intersected by buildings, and had everywhere drops and right angles; and then, too, the sentries must have seen the fugitive's dark outline,—and thus the road taken by Thénardier remains almost inexplicable. Had he, illumined by that frightful thirst for liberty which changes precipices into moats, iron bars into reeds, a cripple into an athlete, a gouty patient into a bird, stupidity into instinct, instinct into intellect, and intellect into genius, invented and improvised a third mode of escape? No one ever knew.

It is not always possible to explain the marvels of an escape; the man who breaks prison is, we repeat, inspired, there is a flash in the mysterious light of the flight; the effort made for deliverance is no less surprise than the soaring toward the sublime, and people say of an escaped robber, "How did he manage to scale that roof?" in the same way as they say of Corneille, "Where did he find his *qu'il mourût*?" However this may be, Thénardier, dripping with perspiration, wet through with rain, with his clothes in rags, his hands scarified, his elbows bleeding, and his knees lacerated, reached the ruin-wall, lay down full length on it, and then his strength failed him. A perpendicular wall as high as a three-storeyed house

separated him from the street, and the rope he had was too short. He waited there, pale, exhausted, despairing, though just now so hopeful, still covered by night, but saying to himself that day would soon come; horrified at the thought that he should shortly hear it strike four from the neighbouring clock of St Paul, the hour when the sentry would be changed and be found asleep under the hole in the roof. Thénardier regarded with stupor at such a depth below, and in the light of the lamps, the wet black pavement—that desired and terrific pavement which was death and which was liberty. He asked himself whether his three accomplices had succeeded in escaping, whether they were waiting for him, and if they would come to his help? He listened: excepting a patrol, no one had passed through the street since he had been lying there. Nearly all the market carts from Montreuil, Charonne, Vincennes, and Bercy came into town by the Rue St Antoine.

Four o'clock struck, and Thénardier trembled. A few minutes after, the startled and confused noise which follows the discovery of an escape broke out in the prison. The sound of doors being opened and shut, the creaking of gates on their hinges, the tumult at the guard-room, and the clang of musket butts on the pavement of the yards, reached his ears; lights flashed past the grated windows of the sleeping wards, a torch ran along the roof of the New Building, and the sappers were called out. Three caps which the torch lit up in the rain, came and went along the roofs, and at the same time Thénardier saw, in the direction of the Bastille, a livid gleam mournfully whitening the sky. He was on the top of a wall ten inches wide, lying in the pitiless rain, with a gulf on his right hand and on his left, unable to stir, suffering from the dizziness of a possible fall and the horror of a certain arrest, and his mind, like the clapper of a bell, went from one of these ideas to the other: "Dead if I fall, caught if I remain." In this state of agony he suddenly saw in the still perfectly dark street, a man, who glided along the walls and came from the Rue Pavée, stop in the gap over which Thénardier was, as it were, suspended. This man was joined by a second, who walked with similar caution, then by a third, and then by a fourth. When these men were together, one of them raised the hasp of the hoarding gate, and all four entered the enclosure where the hut is, and stood exactly under Thénardier. These men had evidently selected this place to consult in, in order not to be seen by passers-by, or the sentry guarding the wicket of la Force a few paces distant. We must say, too, that the rain kept this sentry confined to his box. Thénardier, unable to

distinguish their faces, listened to their remarks with the desperate attention of a wretch who feels himself lost. He felt something like hope pass before his eyes, when he heard these men talking slang. The first said, in a low voice but distinctly, something which we had better translate.

"Let us be off. What are we doing here?"

The second replied,—

"It is raining hard enough to put out the fire of hell. And then the police will pass soon; besides, there is a sentry on. We shall get ourselves arrested here."

Two words employed, *icigo* and *icicaille*, which both mean here, and which belong, the first to the flash language of the *barrières*, and the second to that of the Temple, were rays of light for Thénardier. By the *icigo* he recognized Brujon, who was a prowler at the *barrières*, and by *icicaille* Babet, who, among all his other trades, had been a second-hand clothes-dealer at the Temple. The antique slang of the great century is only talked now at the Temple, and Babet was the only man who spoke it in its purity. Had it not been for the *icicaille*, Thénardier could not have recognized him, for he had completely altered his voice. In the mean while the third man had interfered.

"There is nothing to hurry us, so let us wait a little. What is there to tell us that he does not want us?"

Through this, which was only French, Thénardier recognized Montparnasse, whose pride it was to understand all the slang dialects and not speak one of them. As for the fourth man, he held his tongue, but his wide shoulders denounced him, and Thénardier did not hesitate; it was Gueulemer. Brujon replied almost impetuously, but still in a low voice,—

"What is that you are saying? The landlord has not been able to escape. A man must be a clever hand to tear up his shirt and cut his sheets in slips to make a rope; to make holes in doors; manufacture false papers; make false keys; file his fetters through; hang his rope out of the window; hide and disguise himself. The old chap cannot have done this, for he does not know how to work."

Babet added, still in the correct classic slang which Poiailier and Cartouche spoke, and which is to the new, bold, and coloured slang which Brujon employed what the language of Racine is to that of André Chénier.

"Your landlord has been caught in the act, for he is only an apprentice. He has let himself be duped by a spy, perhaps by a sheep, who played the pal. Listen, Montparnasse; do you hear those shouts in the prison? You saw all those

candles ; he is caught again, and will get off with twenty years. I am not frightened, I am no coward, as is well known, but there is nothing to be done, and we shall be trapped. Do not feel offended, but come with us, and let us drink a bottle of old wine together."

"Friends must not be left in a difficulty," Montparnasse growled.

"I tell you he is caught again," Brujon resumed, "and at this moment the landlord is not worth a halfpenny. We can do nothing for him, so let us be off. I feel at every moment as if a policeman were holding me in his hand."

Montparnasse resisted but feebly ; the truth is, that these four men, with the fidelity which bandits have of never deserting each other, had prowled the whole night round la Force, in spite of the peril they incurred, in the hope of seeing Thénardier appear on the top of some wall. But the night which became really too favourable, for the rain rendered all the streets deserted ; the cold which attacked them, their dripping clothes, their worn-out shoes, the alarming noises which had broken out in the prison, the hours which had elapsed, the patrols they had met, the hope which departed and the fear that returned,—all this urged them to retreat. Montparnasse himself, who was perhaps Thénardier's son-in-law in a certain sense, yielded, and in a moment they would be gone. Thénardier gasped on his wall like the shipwrecked crew of the *Méduse* did on their raft, when they watched the ship which they had sighted, fade away on the horizon. He did not dare call to them, for a cry overheard might ruin everything, but he had an idea, a last idea, an inspiration,—he took from his pocket the end of Brujon's rope which he had detached from the chimney of the New Building, and threw it at their feet.

"A cord !" said Babet.

"My cord !" said Brujon.

"The landlord is there," said Montparnasse. They raised their eyes and Thénardier thrust out his head a little.

"Quiet," said Montparnasse ; "have you the other end of the rope, Brujon ?"

"Yes."

"Fasten the two ends together, we will throw the rope to him, he will attach it to the wall, and it will be long enough for him to come down."

Thénardier ventured to raise his voice,—

"I am wet through."

"We'll warm you."

"I cannot stir."

"You will slip down, and we will catch you."

"My hands are swollen."

"Only just fasten the rope to the wall."

"I can't."

"One of us must go up," said Montparnasse.

"Three storeys!" Brujon ejaculated.

An old plaster conduit pipe, which had served as a chimney for a stove, formerly lit in the hut, ran along the wall almost to the spot where Thénardier was lying. This pipe, which at that day was full of cracks and holes, has since fallen down, but its traces may be seen. It was very narrow.

"It would be possible to mount by that," said Montparnasse.

"By that pipe?" Babet exclaimed; "a man? oh no, a boy is required."

"Yes, a boy," Brujon said in affirmative.

"Where can we find one?" Gueulemer said.

"Wait a minute," Montparnasse said, "I have it."

He gently opened the hoarding door, assured himself that there was no passer-by in the street, went out, shut the gate cautiously after him, and ran off in the direction of the Bastille. Seven or eight minutes elapsed, eight thousand centuries for Thénardier; Babet, Brujon, and Gueulemer did not open their lips: the door opened again, and Montparnasse came in, panting and leading Gavroche. The rain continued to make the street completely deserted. Little Gavroche stepped into the enclosure and looked calmly at the faces of the bandits. The rain was dripping from his hair, and Gueulemer said to him,—

"Brat, are you a man?"

Gavroche shrugged his shoulders, and replied,—

"A child like me is a man, and men like you are children."

"What a well-hung tongue the brat has!" Babet exclaimed.

"The boy of Paris is not made of wet paste," Brujon added.

"What do you want of me?" said Gavroche.

Montparnasse answered,—

"Climb up that pipe."

"With this rope," Babet remarked.

"And fasten it," Brujon continued.

"At the top of the wall," Babet added.

"To the cross bar of the window," Brujon said, finally.

"What next?" asked Gavroche.

"Here it is," said Gueulemer.

The gamin examined the rope, the chimney, the wall, and the window, and gave that indescribable and disdainful smack of the lips which signifies, "What is it?"

"There is a man up there whom you will save," Montparnasse continued,—

"Are you willing?" Brujon asked.

"Ass!" the lad replied, as if the question seemed to him extraordinary, and took off his shoes.

Gueulemer seized Gavroche by one arm, placed him on the roof of the pent-houses, where mouldering planks bent under the boy's weight, and handed him the rope which Brujon had joined again during the absence of Montparnasse. The gamin turned to the chimney, which it was an easy task to enter by a large crevice close to the roof. At the moment when he was going to ascend, Thénardier, who saw safety and life approaching, leant over the edge of the wall; the first gleam of day whitened his dark forehead, his livid cheek-bones, his sharp savage nose, and his bristling grey beard, and Gavroche recognized him.

"Hilloh!" he said, "it's my father; well, that won't stop me."

And, taking the rope between his teeth, he resolutely commenced his ascent. He reached the top of the wall, straddled across it like a horse, and securely fastened the rope to the topmost cross bar of the window. A moment after, Thénardier was in the street; so soon as he touched the pavement, so soon as he felt himself out of danger, he was no longer wearied, chilled, or trembling; the terrible things he had passed through were dissipated like smoke, and all his strange and ferocious intellect was re-aroused, and found itself erect and free, ready to march onward. The first remark this man made was,—

"Well, whom are we going to eat?"

It is unnecessary to explain the meaning of this frightfully transparent sentence, which signifies at once killing, assassinating, and robbing. The real meaning of *to eat* is *to devour*.

"We must get into hiding," said Brujon. "We will understand each other in three words, and then separate at once. There was an affair that seemed good in the Rue Plumet, a deserted street, an isolated house, old rust-eaten railings looking on a garden, and lone women."

"Well, why not try it?" Thénardier asked.

"Your daughter Eponine went to look at the thing," Babet answered.

"And gave Magnon a biscuit," Brujon added; "there's nothing to be done there."

"The girl's no fool," said Thénardier, "still we must see."

"Yes, yes," Brujon remarked, "we must see."

Not one of the men seemed to notice Gavroche, who, during this colloquy, was sitting on one of the posts; he waited some



When Gavroche had disappeared round the corner of des Ballets, Babet took Thénardier on one side.

"Do you notice that brat?" he asked him.

"What brat?"

"The one who climbed up the wall and handed rope."

"Not particularly."

"Well, I don't know, but I fancy it's your son."

"Nonsense," said Thénardier; "do you think so?"

END OF VOL. II.



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